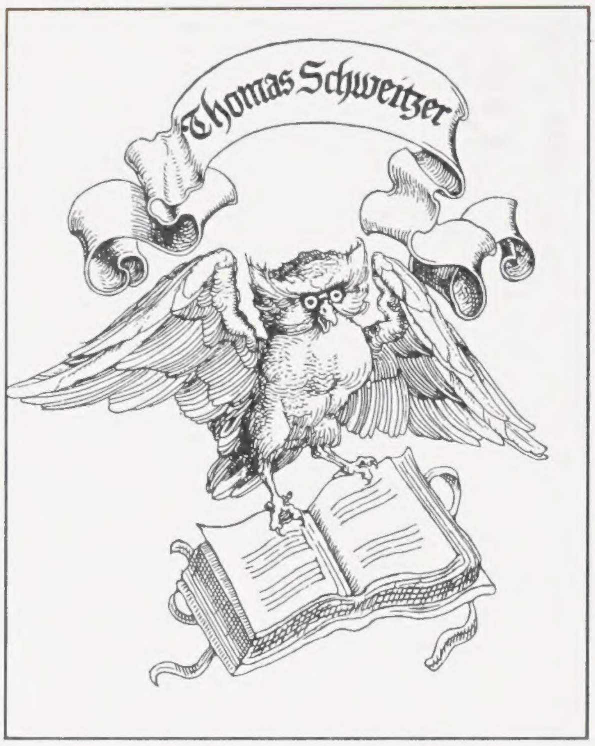

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LOCKHART'S

LIFE OF SCOTT

COPIOUSLY ANNOTATED AND ABUNDANTLY ILLUSTRATED

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOL. I

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WALTER SCOTT IN 1777

From the miniature by Kay

MEMOIRS
of the Life of
Sir Walter Scott
BART.

by

John Gibson Lockhart

In Ten Volumes

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

BART.

BY

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME I

TORONTO
GEORGE N. MORANG AND COMPANY, LIMITED
1901

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, which divides with Boswell's *Life of Johnson* the honor of leading all lives of English men of letters, was first published in seven volumes in 1837–1838. A second edition, with some corrections, some slight revisions, and a few additions, mostly in the form of notes, was published in 1839, and this has remained ever since the standard edition. Later, in 1848, Lockhart prepared, at the request of the publishers of that work, a condensation of his *magnum opus*, and took that occasion to add a few facts bearing upon the *Life* which had occurred since the original publication, and a few comments which it would not have been in good taste to make in the first instance. Throughout his original work, Lockhart, with all his openness of speech, yet refrained from certain personal references, the subjects of which were too recent for remark, and he concealed many names under the disguise of initials.

Since the edition of 1839 there have been many issues of this great work on both sides of the Atlantic. As late as 1861, Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, predecessors of the present publishers of the work, issued an edition in nine volumes, and took occasion to insert some material from Lockhart's abridgment. They prefaced the edition, which they dedicated to Nathaniel Hawthorne, with a brief sketch of Lockhart.

Neither these publishers nor any others, so far as we know, have ever done more than reprint the original work, save for the slight modification just mentioned. Meanwhile for the past sixty years, and more especially during the past twenty years, a crowd of books has been published throwing light on Lockhart's great subject. Memoirs, reminiscences, editions of Scott's writings, literary studies, articles in reviews and magazines have added materially to our knowledge not only of Scott, but of many others of the personages who throng the chapters of Lockhart's work. Lockhart himself has been made the subject of a generous biography, and it would seem as though, lasting as is the fame of the *Life*, its necessary silences were becoming every year more conspicuous.

Accordingly, the present publishers resolved to issue an edition which should repair the damage which Time had wrought, and they entrusted the editing to Miss Susan M. Francis, who through her long conversance with the original work, and her familiarity with the literature which has grown up about Scott, as well as her knowledge of the more or less obscure sources of information, was peculiarly competent not only to do the service of Old Mortality, but to set in order the inscriptions still to be added to the stones of Scott's associates.

The principle upon which Lockhart's Scott is now edited may be stated in very few words. The original work is reprinted without change, except that initials have been extended to full names in a great many instances, obvious printers' errors corrected, and Scott's journals revised to conform with the authoritative edition by Mr. David Douglas. Then, the text has been annotated by fuller accounts of many of the persons to whom Scott or Lockhart refer, and very many passages have been expanded or illuminated by extracts from Scott's letters and journals, and from a variety of books and articles bearing upon the subject. In a number of instances the narrative of persons who were living when Lockhart wrote has been carried forward to show their after career. All the editor's work is indicated by its enclosure in brackets. Lockhart's later notes are indicated by the years 1839, 1845, and 1848, enclosed in parentheses.

In making this annotation recourse has been had first of all to the editions of Scott's *Familiar Letters* and *Journal*, so thoroughly and admirably edited by Mr. David Douglas. No one who undertakes to work at the life of Scott fails to confess a deep obligation to this gentleman. Not only so, but Mr. Douglas has repeatedly come to the editor's aid in settling those nice points which arise in any piece of careful editing. His own notes when used always bear his initials at the close. Lang's *Life and Letters of Lockhart* has also been in frequent use, and of general works *The Dictionary of National Biography* has been in constant demand. The more one uses it the more one comes to value the accuracy of its statements, and the thoroughness with which its subjects have been treated. Of the very large number of memoirs and reminiscences consulted, mention may be made of *Selections from the Manuscripts of Lady Louisa Stuart*, by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers, the American publishers of the work ; Mrs. Oliphant's *William Blackwood and his Sons*, and the other two works on the great publishing houses, Smiles's *Memoir of John Murray* and *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents ;* Carruthers's *Abbotsford Notanda* and the *Catalogue of the Scott Centenary Exhibition* have been referred to, and the memoirs and reminiscences connected with the names of

Maria Edgeworth, Washington Irving, Leslie, George Ticknor, Haydon, Byron, Moore, Charles Mayne Young, Wordsworth, Crabbe, Lord Cockburn, Miss Ferrier, Mrs. Kemble, and others; while for the later history of the Scott family, the *Life of James Hope-Scott* has been serviceable. The attentive reader will readily understand that the editor has also gone to numberless books and magazine articles for the proper confirmation of petty facts and the assurance of accuracy.

To complete the worth of this edition, the publishers have taken pains to illustrate it abundantly with portraits and other pictures, and to obtain these they have gone as far as possible in every case to the original sources. The result is a great English classic of abiding value, faithfully reproduced, and so supplemented by editorial and artistic labor as to be brought up to date in all essential particulars.

4 Park Street, Boston.
Autumn, 1901.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART was born in the manse of Cambusnethan, July 14, 1794. His father, the Rev. John Lockhart, was twice married, and of the children of his first wife only one, William, the laird of Milton-Lockhart, reached manhood. The second Mrs. Lockhart was Elizabeth, the daughter of the Rev. John Gibson, minister of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and that clergyman's namesake was her eldest child. "Every Scottishman has his pedigree," says Scott in his fragment of Autobiography, and there is no lack of interest in the honorable one of his son-in-law, from the days of Simon Locard of the Lee, in the county of Lanark, who was knighted by Robert the Bruce, and after his king's death sailed with the good Lord James Douglas, who was bearing his master's heart to the Holy Land, — the heart which Locard rescued from the Moors, when Douglas fell fighting in Spain, and brought back to Scotland with Lord James's body. Then the Locards added to their armorial bearings a heart within a fetterlock, and took the name of Lockhart. From Sir Stephen Lockhart of Cleghorn, a man of note in the court of James III., was descended Robert Lockhart of Birkhill, who fought for the Covenant, and led the Lanarkshire Whigs at the battle of Bothwell Brig.

William Lockhart, the Covenanter's grandson, married Violet Inglis, the heiress of Corehouse. The Rev. John Lockhart was the younger of their two sons. From his father Lockhart seems to have inherited his scholarly tastes, while in person he appears to have resembled his mother; to both he was always the most affectionate and devoted of sons. His warmth of feeling, even in childhood, as well as his constitutional reserve, is shown by his intense suffering at the loss of a younger brother and sister, who died within a few days of each other. He did not weep like the rest of the children, or show other sign of emotion, but fell seriously ill, and was long in recovering from the shock. From the first he was a delicate child, and the removal of the family from country to town, when he was in his second year, probably did not tend to strengthen him. Dr. Lockhart became minister of the College Kirk in Glasgow, and his son in due time entered the High School there. In after-years his schoolmates remembered him as a very clever, but hardly a diligent boy. Though frequently absent from illness (one of these childish maladies caused the deafness in one ear from which he suffered), he always kept his place at the head of his class. "He never seemed to learn anything when the class was sitting down," wrote a fellow-pupil, "and on returning after one of his illnesses, he of course went to the bottom, but we had not been five minutes up when he began to take places, and he invariably succeeded, sometimes before the class was dismissed at noon, in getting to the top of it again."

In 1805, when he had but just entered his twelfth year, Lockhart matriculated at the University of Glasgow. More than fifty years later, two of his classmates wrote their recollections of the boy student, — recollections vivid enough to show how strong an impression he made on his companions. He still was somewhat delicate in health, and kept a high position in his studies more from ability than assiduity. A strong sense of the ludicrous, allied with a turn for satire, was already one of his marked traits. At the close of the session of 1805–6 a little incident shows the admiration felt for him by some of his companions. He had been disappointed in not obtaining a certain Latin prize, and several of his friends, sharing his feeling, determined to present to him a testimonial. He was very fond of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, then a new book, so the lads procured a splendidly bound copy, and, at their suggestion, the Professor, at the public distribution of prizes, gave the volume with warm commendations to Johannes Lockhart, as a prize the students had themselves provided. It was not till Lockhart joined the logic class (at the age of thirteen), that he suddenly outstripped all his companions, whom he later astonished by the amount of Greek which he *professed* at the Blackstone examination. It was thought a *profession* of reasonable amount " when a student intimated his willingness to translate and be examined critically on Anacreon, two or three of Lucian's dialogues, extracts from Epictetus, Bion, and Moschus, and perhaps a book or two of Homer." " But," declares one of his former fellow-students, " Lockhart professed the whole Iliad and Odyssey and I know not how much besides." His brilliant success on this occasion led to his being offered one of the Snell Exhibitions to Oxford, — an offer which was accepted after some hesitation on account of his youth. He was not yet fifteen, and still wore the round jacket of a schoolboy when he was entered at Balliol College.

One of Lockhart's closest friends at Oxford and ever after, Mr. J. H. Christie, describes the young student at this time: " Lockhart immediately made his general talents felt by his tutor and his companions. His most remarkable characteristic, however, was the exuberant spirits which found vent in constant flashes of merriment brightened and pointed with wit and satire at once droll and tormenting. Even a lecture-room was not exempt from these irrepressible sallies; and our tutor, who was formal and wished to be grave, but had not the gift of gravity, never felt safe in the presence of his mercurial pupil. Lockhart with great readiness comprehended the habits and tone of the new society in which he was placed, and was not for a moment wanting in any of its requirements; but this adaptive power never interfered with the marked individuality of his own character and bearing. He was at once a favorite and formidable. In those days he was an incessant caricaturist; his papers, his books, and the walls of his rooms were crowded with portraitures of his friends and himself — so like as to be unmistakable, with an exaggeration of any peculiarity so droll and so provoking as to make the picture anything but flattering to the self-love of its subject. This propensity was so strong in him that I was surprised when in after-life he repressed it at once and forever. In the last thirty years of his life I do not think he ever drew a caricature."[1]

In these days Lockhart read not only Greek and Latin, but French, Italian, and Spanish. German interested him later. At Balliol he formed some friendships which ended only with life; no man was ever truer to his early friends than he, and few have had friends more loyal.[2]

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[1] *Quarterly Review*, vol. cxvi. p. 447.

[2] To one of these friends, the Rev. George Robert Gleig, Chaplain General of the Forces, we owe the only authoritative account of Lockhart's early life. This is to be found in the interesting article, the *Life of Lockhart*, in the Quarterly Review for October, 1864. Like his friend, Mr. Gleig was educated at Glasgow University, was a Snell Scholar, and was an early contributor to *Blackwood* and to *Fraser*. Later he wrote for both the great Reviews. He was long the last survivor of the early *Blackwood* and *Fraser* groups. He died in 1888, in his ninety-third year. The name which stood next to Lockhart in the alphabetical arrangement of the first

He gained his first class in 1813 — he was not yet nineteen — and returned to his father's house in Glasgow, which he was to leave two years later for Edinburgh, there to read law and begin the literary work which was to prove the real business of his life. He became acquainted with William Blackwood, who, when the young advocate was about to visit Germany in the vacation of 1817, enabled him to undertake the then toilsome and expensive journey by paying liberally, not less than £300, it is said, for a translation to be made later. Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature was the work Lockhart selected, and of this incident Mr. Gleig says: "Though seldom communicative on such subjects, he more than once alluded to the circumstance in after-life, and always in the same terms. 'It was a generous act on Ebony's part, and a bold one too; for he had only my word for it that I had any acquaintance at all with the German language!'" It was a generous act, and also one showing keen perception on the part of the publisher. At this time began Lockhart's intimacy with John Wilson, with whom he was so largely to share the achievements, glorious and inglorious, of Mr. Blackwood's magazine in its reckless youth. Unfortunately, the older and more experienced writer was no safe guide for his brilliant but very young co-worker, still with a boy's fondness for mischief and a dangerous wit, to which the almost sublime self-complacency of the dominant Whig coteries would offer abundant opportunities of exercise. Lockhart was not a sinner above others, but in the end he was made something like the scapegoat of all the offenders, whose misdeeds, occasionally serious enough, are sometimes in view of the journalistic and critical amenities then prevail-

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class was that of Henry Hart Milman, his dear friend in later life, and one of his most constant and valued allies in the *Quarterly*. His correspondence with Milman forms an interesting feature of Lang's *Life*.

ing in the organs of both parties hardly so heinous as to account for the excitement that attended them.

What Lockhart thought of these youthful literary escapades in his sober and saddened middle age is shown in a letter written in 1838: "I was a raw boy who had never before had the least connection with politics or controversies of any kind, when, arriving in Edinburgh in October, 1817, I found my friend John Wilson (ten years my senior) busied in helping Blackwood out of a scrape he had got into with some editors of his Magazine, and on Wilson's asking me to try my hand at some squibberies in his aid, I sat down to do so with as little malice as if the assigned subject had been the Court of Pekin. But the row in Edinburgh, the lordly Whigs having considered persiflage as their own fee-simple, was really so extravagant that when I think of it now the whole story seems wildly incredible. Wilson and I were singled out to bear the whole burden of sin, though there were abundance of other criminals in the concern; and by and by, Wilson passing for being a very eccentric fellow, and I for a cool one, even he was allowed to get off comparatively scot-free, while I, by far the youngest and least experienced of the set, and who alone had no personal grudges against any of Blackwood's victims, remained under such an accumulation of wrath and contumely as would have crushed me utterly, unless for the buoyancy of extreme youth. I now think with deep sadness of the pain my jokes and jibes inflicted on better men than myself, and I can say that I have omitted in my mature years no opportunity of trying to make reparation where I really had been the offender. But I was not the doer of half the deeds set down to my account, nor can I, in the face of much evidence printed and unprinted, believe that, after all, our Ebony (as we used to call the man and his book) had half so much to answer for as the more regular artillery which the old Quarterly played incessantly, in those days, on the same parties. . . . I believe the only individuals whom Blackwood ever really and essentially injured were myself and Wilson."[1]

In May, 1818, occurred the day, memorable to Lockhart, when he first met Scott, who later invited him to visit Abbotsford. The meeting and visit have been described by Lockhart, as he alone could do it; but he does not tell how speedily he won the regard and confidence of the elder writer, feelings that were constantly to grow warmer and stronger as the years went on. Scott heartily welcomed Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk the next year, those clever, vivid, and apparently harmless sketches of the Edinburgh of that day, — literary, artistic, legal, clerical, — which caused an outcry not now to be understood. In April, 1820, Lockhart and Sophia Scott were married, — a perfect marriage in its mutual love and trust. How willingly Sir Walter gave the daughter, so peculiarly dear to him, to the husband of her choice, his letters to his intimate correspondents show; and how fortunate the union was to be for him in its results, he seems almost to have divined. It gave him not only the most affectionate and devoted of sons, — such love was already his, — but also the most complete comprehension and sympathy in his home circle. And all the rare literary gifts which he so early discerned and so heartily admired in his young friend, informed by delicate insight, loving knowledge, and a keen intelligence, were to be employed to make him known to the world, so that the great author should be loved even above his works.

In the next few years, spent at Edinburgh and at Chiefswood, years that Lockhart was to remember as the happiest of his life, he did much literary work, beside the occasional articles for Blackwood. Valerius was published in 1821, — the story of a visitor from Britain to Rome in the time of the persecution of the Christians under Trajan. It is admirably well written, and reads exactly like what it professes to be, — a translation from the Latin. "I am quite delighted with the reality of your Romans," wrote Scott to the author. But the very correctness of the studies makes them seem remote and cold to the ordinary reader.[1] A little later, appeared by far the best of Lockhart's novels, Some Passages in the Life of Mr. Adam Blair, Minister of the Gospel at Cross Meikle. A story of the temptation and fall of a good man, which his father told one day after dinner, suggested this tale, which is written with force and feeling, a passion that is still glowing, and a pathos which can still move, while there are both strength and delicacy of touch in the character-drawing. Reginald Dalton was published in 1823, and was at the time a decided success; but these somewhat exaggerated sketches of Oxford life are now chiefly interesting for the glimpses of personal experience to be found in the early chapters. Matthew Wald followed in 1824, and was the last novel written by Lockhart. Scott characterized it succinctly as "full of power, but disagreeable, and ends vilely ill," a kind of tale which had not yet become popular. There is power in the description of an ever growing selfishness and unrestrained passion ending in madness; but the story is ill constructed, and, despite some vigorous and graphic passages, has not real vitality.

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[1] Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, vol. i. pp. 128–130.

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[1] It has been said of *Valerius*, that it "contains as much knowledge of its period, and that knowledge as accurate, as would furnish out a long and elaborate German treatise on a martyr and his time;" so that, whether the report that reached its author, that the novel had been used in Harvard College as a handbook, was correct or no, it would scarcely have been a misuse of the book. It is certain that it was speedily appropriated by an American publisher, and we have a traditional knowledge of its having been much read and admired in certain New England circles.

Lockhart edited a new edition of Don Quixote in 1822, and the next year published his Ancient Spanish Ballads, most of which had been previously printed in Blackwood's Magazine. This was the first of his books to bear his name, which the volume, winning wide and enduring success, made well known. Some competent critics have agreed with Scott in regarding the translations as "much finer than the originals," but, however this may be, there is no question whatever as to the excellence of the ballads in their English form. They have vigor and swiftness of movement, grace and picturesqueness, simplicity and spontaneity. And there are exquisite lyrics amongst them, witness The Wandering Knight's Song. Mr. Lang has made a few selections from Lockhart's scattered verse in Blackwood as further illustrations of his poetic gift, — a number of admirable stanzas (in the character of Wastle) in the *ottava rima* of Whistlecraft and Beppo (1819); the best known of his comic poems, Captain Paton's Lament; and some lines from a translation in hexameters of the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad, that appeared as late as 1843, which must have sent more than one reader to the magazine, and made them echo the biographer's words, that "Lockhart had precisely the due qualifications for a translator, in sympathy, poetic feeling, and severe yet genial taste, and could have left a name for a popular, yet close and spirited version of the Iliad," had he not, after this single anonymous publication, abandoned his half-formed project. As one of his friends wrote with great truth, "Lockhart was guilty of injustice to his own surpassing powers. With all his passion for letters, with all the ambition for literary fame which burnt in his youthful mind, there was still his shyness, fastidiousness, reserve. No doubt he might have taken a higher place as a poet than by the Spanish Ballads, as a writer of fiction than by his novels. These seem to have been thrown off by a sudden uncontrollable impulse to relieve the mind of its fulness, rather than as works of finished art or mature study. They were the flashes of a genius which would not be suppressed; no one esteemed them more humbly than Lockhart, or, having once cast them on the world, thought less of their fame."[1]

The early years of Lockhart's married life were so intimately connected with the life of Scott as to need no chronicle here. The young advocate, with many of the qualities essential to the making of a great lawyer, lacked one most needful to his branch of the profession, facility as a public speaker; his extreme shyness would account for this. As he said at the farewell dinner given to him by his friends in Edinburgh: "You know as well as I, that if I had ever been able to make a speech, there would have been no cause for our present meeting." So literature had become more and more his occupation, — it became entirely so when, in the autumn of 1826, he accepted the editorship of the Quarterly Review, — a very responsible and distinguished post for so young a man, when the position of the Review at that time, in politics, literature, and society, is considered. Such newspapers as were in a few years to become powerful in the world of cultivated (and respectable) readers were as yet, relatively speaking, in an undeveloped state. Editor of the Quarterly, he was to remain, till hopelessly impaired health brought an end to his labors, nearly twenty-eight years later. During these years he contributed more than a hundred articles to the Review, on the greatest possible variety of topics, — he could write on everything, from poetry to dry-rot, it was said. He was that rare thing in our race, a born critic; but he did not use the work criticised as a text for a discourse of his own; but of deliberate choice, it would seem, kept closely to his author. So, many of his papers are simply admirable reviews written for the day, not essays for future readers. But, as one turns the pages of the Quarterly, how alive some of the most transient of these articles seem, in comparison with the often excellent matter in which they are embedded! The clear, forcible style, the keen wit, the thorough workmanship, are never wanting. As would be expected, there is permanent interest in the biographical studies; of these, one of the most interesting and impressive was fortunately republished in another form.

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[1] From the interesting obituary notice in the *London Times* for December 9, 1854, supposed to have been written by Dean Milman and Lady Eastlake.

As a biographer this variously accomplished man of letters was to show a gift that can almost be called unique. His Life of Burns, published in 1828, was written when the Scotland of the poet was still known to all his mature countrymen, though it was too early for the thoroughgoing scrutiny into every detail of his history practised by later writers; but, setting that consideration aside, the sympathy, intelligence, good taste, fairness, and above all, the sanity of the work, to say nothing of its admirable literary quality, have given it a position by itself, which it is not likely to lose. This memoir is not an over-large book, but the Life of Theodore Hook — a reprint of a Quarterly Review article written in 1843 — is one of the smallest of volumes, yet it is written with so fine an art, the presentment of its subject, if rapidly sketched, is so vivid, that the reader feels no sense either of crowded incidents or large omissions; with this biographer the story is of perfect proportion, whether it fills seven volumes or one, or does not extend beyond the limits of a *brochure*. Nothing Lockhart did was ever in the smallest degree slovenly or careless, but his admirable workmanship is specially evident in the Life of Scott. The skill is masterly with which the immense mass of material has been handled, making letters, diaries, extracts, and narrative one harmonious whole, with never an occasional roughness to cause the ordinary reader fully to realize the smoothness of the road he is traversing. The absolute modesty and freedom from self-consciousness of the author — the editor, he calls himself — in telling a tale of which for a number of years he formed a part, is as striking as it is rare. He is one of the actors in a great drama; if it be necessary now and then that he should come to the front, he does it simply and naturally — that is all. Always and everywhere the hero is the central figure to whose full presentation all else is subsidiary. There is no need to speak of the faultlessness of the style, or of the deep but always manly feeling with which the more intimate details of the story are told; effusiveness or sentimentality was as alien to Lockhart as to Scott, and for these reasons no familiarity or change in literary fashions can make the matchless closing pages less moving; they are of the things that remain.

In January, 1837, Lockhart wrote a letter to William Laidlaw, of singular autobiographic interest. After thanking his friend for a letter and a present of ptarmigan, "both welcome as remembrances of Scotland and old days," he says: —

"The account you give of your situation at present is, considering how the world wags, not unsatisfactory. Would it were possible to find myself placed in something of a similar locality, and with the means of enjoying the country by day and my books at night, without the necessity of dividing most of my time between the labors of the desk — mere drudge labors mostly — and the harassing turmoil of worldly society, for which I never had much, and nowadays have rarely indeed any relish! But my wife and children bind me to the bit, and I am well pleased with the fetters. Walter is now a tall and very handsome boy of nearly eleven years; Charlotte a very winsome gypsy of nine, — both intelligent in the extreme, and both, notwithstanding all possible spoiling, as simple, natural and unselfish as if they had been bred on a hillside and in a family of twelve. Sophia is your old friend, — fat, fair, and by and by to be forty, which I now am, and over, God bless the mark! but though I think I am wiser, at least more sober, neither richer nor more likely to be rich than I was in the days of Chiefswood and Kaeside, — after all, our best days, I still believe."

He goes on to say that he has quite forsworn politics, over which he and his correspondent used sometimes to dispute, and has satisfied himself "that the age of Toryism is by forever." He remains "a very tranquil and indifferent observer."

"Perhaps, however, much of this equanimity as to passing affairs has arisen from the call which has been made on me to live in the past, bestowing for so many months all the time I could command, and all the care I have really any heart in, upon the manuscript remains of our dear friend. I am glad that Cadell and the few others who have seen what I have done with these are pleased, but I assure you none of them can think more lightly of my own part in the matter than I do myself. My sole object is to do him justice, or rather to let him do himself justice, by so contriving it that he shall be as far as possible, from first to last, his own historiographer; and I have therefore willingly expended the time that would have sufficed for writing a dozen books on what will be no more than the compilation of one. A stern sense of duty — that kind of sense of it which is combined with the feeling of his actual presence in a serene state of elevation above all terrestrial and temporary views — will induce me to touch the few darker points in his life and character as freely as the others which were so predominant; and my chief anxiety on the appearance of the book will be, not to hear what is said by the world, but what is thought by you and the few others who can really compare the representation as a whole with the facts of the case. I shall, therefore, desire Cadell to send you the volumes as they are printed, though long before publication, in the confidence that they will be kept sacred, while unpublished, to yourself and your own household ; and if you can give me encouragement on seeing the first and second, now I think nearly out of the printer's hands, it will be very serviceable to me in the completion of the others. I have waived all my own notions as to the manner of publication, and so forth, in deference to the bookseller, who is still so largely our creditor, and, I am grieved to add, will probably continue to be so for many years to come.

"Your letters of the closing period I wish you would send to me ; and of these I am sure some use, and some good use, may be made, as of those addressed to myself at the same time, which all, however melancholy to compare with those of the better day, have traces of the man. Out of these confused and painful scraps I think I can contrive to put together a picture that will be highly touching of a great mind shattered, but never degraded, and always to the last noble, as his heart continued pure and warm as long as it could beat."[1]

A few weeks after this letter was written Mrs. Lockhart was seized with an illness almost hopeless, it would seem, from the first. She died May 17, and this bereavement overclouded the rest of her husband's life, though, after a few months' retirement to Milton-Lockhart, he returned to his usual occupations, more devoted than ever to his children, their happiness and well-being having become the object of his life. Of his own rarely expressed feelings, we get a glimpse in a letter to Milman written five years later (October, 1842), after he had attended the funeral of the wife of a friend. His correspondent at this time was mourning the loss of a daughter. "I lived over the hour when you stood by me, — but indeed such an hour is eternally present. After that in every picture of life the central figure is replaced by a black blot; every train of thought terminates in the same blank gulf. I see you have been allowing yourself to dwell too near this dreary region. Escape it while the wife of your youth is still by you; in her presence no grief should be other than gentle." [1]

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[1] *Abbotsford Notanda*, pp. 190–193.

When the earlier volumes of the Life had been published, Lockhart wrote to Haydon: "Your approbation of the Life of Scott is valuable, and might well console me for all the abuse it has called forth, both on him and me. I trusted to the substantial goodness and greatness of the character, and thought I should only make it more effective in portraiture by keeping in the few specks. I despise with my heels the whole trickery of erecting an alabaster image, and calling that a *Man*. . . . The work is now done, and I leave it to its fate. I had no personal object to gratify except, indeed, that I wished and hoped to please my poor wife." From a letter to Miss Edgeworth we learn that Mrs. Lockhart, who had been her husband's secretary for years in the preparation of the Memoirs, only lived to see, not to read, the first volume.[2] It should be said here that the work was in every sense a labor of love on Lockhart's part, as all the profits of the book went towards the payment of Sir Walter's debt.

One of the friends of these years was Carlyle, who had first met Lockhart at a Fraser dinner in 1831, and "rather liked the man, and shall like to meet him again." Long afterward he was to write of him as one "whom in the distance I esteemed more than perhaps he ever knew. Seldom did I speak to him; but hardly ever without learning and gaining something." Though the two men did not meet often, Carlyle became warmly attached to Lockhart, and so much of their correspondence as has been preserved forms one of the most interesting chapters in Mr. Lang's biography. Some of the letters show Carlyle in his best mood, and are peculiarly affectionate in tone. On one occasion he writes to Lockhart, as though sure of his sympathy, in a time of sorrow, and the reply, which came quickly, contains a part of a poem which was written in one of Lockhart's diary books in June, 1841, and cannot be omitted from any sketch of his life: —

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[1] Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, vol. ii. p. 214.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 181, 182.

"When youthful faith has fled,
Of loving take thy leave;
Be constant to the dead,
The dead cannot deceive.

"Sweet, modest flowers of spring,
How fleet your balmy day!
And man's brief year can bring
No secondary May.

"No earthly burst again
Of gladness out of gloom;
Fond hope and vision vain,
Ungrateful to the tomb!

"But 't is an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends will meet once more.

"Beyond the sphere of time,
And sin, and fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

"That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I 'll not forego;
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless to waken so."[1]

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[1] "A few lines sent to him by a friend whom he rarely saw, who is sel-

Carlyle earnestly urged that Lockhart's memoirs should be written while his old friends were yet living. Had this been done, not only would more of his letters have been preserved, to the gain of readers, but some misapprehensions regarding him might not have hardened into conventions.[1] When the Lockharts left Scotland, Sir Walter wrote with much feeling to his good friend, Mrs. Hughes, soon to become and to remain their good friend as well, regarding the painfulness of the separation, adding: "I wish to bespeak your affection for Lockhart. When you come to know him you will not want to be solicited, for I know you will love and understand him, but he is not easy to know or to be appreciated, as he so well deserves, at first; he shrinks at a first touch, but take a good hard hammer (it need not be a sledge one), break the shell, and the kernel will repay you. Under a cold exterior, Lockhart conceals the warmest affections, and where he once professes regard he never changes."[2] Long afterwards, the son-in-law of Lockhart was to speak of the

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dom mentioned in connection with his history, yet who then and always was exceptionally dear to him. The lines themselves were often on his lips to the end of his own life, and will not be easily forgotten by any one who reads them." Froude's *Thomas Carlyle*, vol. i. p. 249.

[1] There were untruths as well; some of them so grotesquely false as now to cause amusement rather than anger. An article on Lockhart in *Temple Bar* for June, 1895 (vol. cv. p. 175), touches on some of these legends, and pleads for a memoir. Gratitude is due to the anonymous writer, for he was, says Mr. Andrew Lang, "the onlie begetter" of that gentleman's biography of Lockhart, which gives so interesting a portrait of its subject, whom, it is plain, the author has learned to love. It is a book written with such sympathetic insight and genuine feeling, that it should hereafter make Lockhart known as he was. Mr. Lang was somewhat hampered (though not very seriously so) by an occasional lack of material, including want of access to the archives of the houses of Blackwood and Murray; but this is partly set right by Mrs. Oliphant's admirable history of *William Blackwood and His Sons*, which gives as graphic a description of the early days of Maga and of Lockhart's connection therewith, indeed of all his relations to the magazine and its publishers, as could be desired.

[2] Scott's *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. p. 389.

"depth and tenderness of feeling which he so often hid under an almost fierce reserve." This reserve, largely the result of constitutional shyness, was intensified by the sharp sorrows of his later life. In truth, as Mr. Leslie Stephen has said: "Lockhart was one of the men who are predestined to be generally misunderstood. He was an intellectual aristocrat, fastidious and over-sensitive, with very fine perceptions, but endowed with rather too hearty a scorn of fools as well as of folly. . . . The shyness due to a sensitive nature, was mistaken, as is so often the case, for supercilious pride, and the unwillingness to wear his heart on his sleeve, for coldness and want of sympathy. Such men have to be content with scanty appreciation from the outside."[1] Fortunately, there were those, not a few, who did not remain outside, and when any of these have written of their friend, there is a singular agreement in their testimony. In every-day matters, in the performance of his editorial or social duties, he was unfailingly prompt, exact, and courteous. Never a rich man, nor ever extravagant in his personal expenditures, he was a most generous giver, especially to unfortunate members of his own craft. Inclined to be somewhat silent in large companies, among his friends he was a brilliant talker, though always a ready and willing listener. He asserted a power over society, Mr. Gleig has noted, "which is not generally conceded to men having only their personal merits to rely upon. He was never the lion of a season, or of two seasons, or of more. He kept his place to the last." Being a gentleman and a man of sense, he neither over-valued nor under-valued the attractions of the great world. Regarding one of his personal attributes, all who saw him were of the same mind: his quite exceptional and very striking beauty of face and distinction of bearing never failed to impress those brought into contact with him ever so slightly, even in the sad days when broken health and much sorrow had made him an old man long before his time. A proud man, he was absolutely without vanity, and had little tolerance for it in others; undoubtedly, some measure of this quality would have made him a happier man, and one more ambitious of literary success. Almost from his boyhood he could greatly admire great work even while it was yet not only caviare to the general, but under the condemnation of the critical arbiters of the day. It was said of him, that as a critic, "high over every other consideration predominated the love of letters. If any work of genius appeared, Trojan or Tyrian, it was one to him — his kindred spirit was kindled at once, his admiration and sympathy threw off all trammel. He would resist rebuke, remonstrance, to do justice to the works of political antagonists — that impartial homage was at once freely, boldly, lavishly paid."

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[1] *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. ii. p. 1.

"The love of children," wrote Mr. Christie, "was stronger in Lockhart than I have ever known it in any other man. I never saw so happy a father as he was with his first-born child in his arms. His first sorrow was the breaking of the health of this child." There is no need here to tell the pathetic story of that brief life; but the same devoted love which had watched over it, was given in full measure to the children who remained. Of the daughter, Mr. Gleig writes: "She was the brightest, merriest, and most affectionate of creatures; and her marriage, in 1847, to Mr. James Hope, met her father's entire approval. He was satisfied that in giving her to Mr. Hope, he entrusted his chief earthly treasure to a tender guardian, and strove, in that reflection, to overshadow the thought that he must himself henceforth be to her an object of secondary interest only. She never voluntarily caused him one moment's pain. Nevertheless, it must not be concealed that the secession of Mr. and Mrs. Hope-Scott to the Roman Catholic faith greatly distressed Lockhart, although he did full justice to the conscientious motives by which they were actuated."[1] His attitude is best shown in the letter written to Mr. Hope at this time, in which he says: "I had clung to the hope that you would not finally quit the Church of England, but am not so presumptuous as to say a word more on that step as respects yourself, who have not certainly assumed so heavy a responsibility without much study and reflection. As concerns others, I am thoroughly aware that they may count upon any mitigation which the purest intentions and the most generous and tender feelings on your part can bring. And I trust that this, the only part of your conduct that has ever given me pain, need not now, or ever, disturb the confidence in which it has been of late a principal consolation for me to live with my son-in-law."[2]

Lockhart's letters show how well pleased he was with his daughter's marriage, though it left him alone in his home. His diary says of 1847: "A year to me of very indifferent health and great anxieties. Charlotte's marriage *the only good thing*." The beginning of the year had been saddened by the death of his brother-in-law, Sir Walter Scott; and the extravagance and waywardness of his son, now the laird of Abbotsford, had already greatly distressed the father and were to inflict more torturing anxiety and keener suffering as time went on. Walter Lockhart, in his happy, healthy boyhood, did not show the intellectual precocity of his elder brother; but he was a handsome, intelligent, and winning lad, with no foreshadowing of the recklessness of his later years. Mr. Lang, who can speak from knowledge, says: "Could all be known and told, it is not too much to say that Lockhart's fortitude during these last years, so black with affliction, bodily and mental, was not less admirable than that of Sir Walter Scott himself. Thus, the trials from which we are tempted to avert our eyes, really brought out the noblest manly qualities of cheerful endurance, of gentle consideration for all, who, being sorry for his sorrow, must be prevented from knowing how deep and incurable were his wounds." And it should be said that in these years Lockhart had to suffer that sharpest of griefs which happily Sir Walter never knew.

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[1] *Quarterly Review*, vol. cxvi. p. 475.

[2] Ornsby's *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, vol. ii. p. 138.

Outwardly, Lockhart's life went on much as usual, save that constantly failing health made editorial labors more fatiguing, and social relaxations less and less frequent. But in his letters there is little change; nothing could overcome "a kind of intellectual high spirits when his pen was in his hand." His ill health is but slightly dwelt upon, and only to his daughter is the ever present anxiety revealed. At last came a ray of hope to the father's heart, a reconciliation, and then Walter's sudden death. Sorely tried as it had been, the father's love had never weakened; and after those inexpressibly sad days at Versailles, recorded with such self-restraint in his letters to his daughter, his health declined rapidly. On July 5, 1853, he notes that his doctors agree that he must not attempt the next Review, and a few days later, he writes, "I suppose my last number of the Quarterly Review." He had never ceased to be an occasional contributor to Blackwood; the pages in memory of its founder, which appeared in October, 1834, were from his pen, and in those days he still took pleasure in sometimes "making a Noctes." The annalist of the Blackwoods has given the last note to the publisher, written very near the end: —

"Dear B., — If you think the enclosed worth a page, any time, they are at the service of Maga, from her very old servant, now released from all service, J. G. L."

That service had lasted for more than the length of a generation.

Dean Boyle, in his interesting notes on Lockhart in his later life, recalls his remark: "If I had to write my Life of Scott over again, now, I should say more about his religious opinions. Some people may think passages in his novels conventional and commonplace, but he hated cant, and every word he said came from his heart." Of Lockhart's own religious opinions, Mr. Gleig writes: "A clergyman, with whom he had lived in constant intimacy from his Oxford days [probably the writer himself], was in the frequent habit, between 1851 and 1853, of calling upon Lockhart in Sussex Place, and taking short walks with him, especially in the afternoons of Sunday. With whatever topic their colloquy might begin, it invariably fell off, so to speak, of its own accord, into discussions upon the character and teachings of the Saviour; upon the influence exercised by both over the opinions and habits of mankind; upon the light thrown by them on man's future state and present destiny; and the points both of similitude and its opposite between the philosophy of Greece in its best days and the religion of Christ. Lockhart was never so charming as in these discussions. It was evident that the subject filled his whole mind, for the views which he enunciated were large, and broad, and most reverential — free at once from the bigoted dogmatism which passes current in certain circles for religion . . . and from the loose, unmeaning jargon which is too often accepted as rational Christianity."[1]

Lockhart spent the autumn and winter of 1853–54 in Rome, seeking too late for such amendment as rest and change might give. He was too ill to take much pleasure in his sojourn there, but his bodily feebleness did not dull his mental vigor, and it is characteristic that he at once began to read Dante with Dr. Lucentini. He knew the language well, but wished to master the difficulties of the great poet, and so turned to the most accomplished of helpers, who naturally found Lockhart a brilliant and acute pupil, the mention of whom ever after roused the teacher to enthusiasm. No one, he declared, had ever put him so on his mettle. The invalid wrote long letters, descriptive of his Roman life, to his daughter, which show that he exerted himself much beyond the little strength that remained to him, and in the spring he gladly turned his face homeward. His resignation of his editorship was now made absolute, and, with greatly diminished income (his expenses in consequence of his son's follies had been heavy), he prepared to leave the house which had been so long his, and seek some new abiding-place. But his release was at hand. In August, he went to Milton-Lockhart, to the kind care of his brother's household, always writing as cheerfully as might be of himself to his daughter. "The weather is delicious," he says in one of the last letters, "warm, very warm, but a gentle breeze keeping the leaves in motion all about, and the sun sheathed, as Wordsworth hath it, with a soft gray layer of cloud. I am glad to fancy you all enjoying yourselves (I include sweet M. M.) in this heavenly summer season. If people knew beforehand what it is to lose health, and all that can't survive health, they would in youth be what it is easy to preach; do you *try?* I fancy it costs none of you very much effort either to be good or happy." In October he went to Abbotsford, and it was at once seen that he was a dying man. He had gone one day in "most heavenly weather," from Milton-Lockhart to Douglas, where he had spent, in the old time, a memorable summer day with the stricken Scott, of which he has left us the record; and he now desired to be driven about to take leave of the places on Tweedside, which then had been a part of his life. His little granddaughter was very dear to him in these last days. It is still remembered, how, as he lay ill, he loved to hear her running about the house. "It is life to me," he said. He died November 25, 1854, and was buried, as he had desired, in Dryburgh Abbey, "at the feet of Sir Walter Scott."

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[1] *Quarterly Review*, vol. cxvi. p. 475.

PREFACE

LONDON, December 20, 1836.

IN obedience to the instructions of Sir Walter Scott's last will, I had made some progress in a narrative of his personal history, before there was discovered, in an old cabinet at Abbotsford, an autobiographical fragment, composed by him in 1808 — shortly after the publication of his Marmion.

This fortunate accident rendered it necessary that I should altogether remodel the work which I had commenced. The first chapter of the following Memoirs consists of the Ashestiel fragment; which gives a clear outline of his early life down to the period of his call to the Bar — July, 1792. All the notes appended to this chapter are also by himself. They are in a handwriting very different from the text, and seem, from various circumstances, to have been added in 1826.

It appeared to me, however, that the author's modesty had prevented him from telling the story of his youth with that fulness of detail which would now satisfy the public. I have therefore recast my own collections as to the period in question, and presented the substance of them, in five succeeding chapters, as *illustrations* of his too brief autobiography. This procedure has been attended with many obvious disadvantages; but I greatly preferred it to printing the precious fragment in an Appendix.

I foresee that some readers may be apt to accuse me of trenching upon delicacy in certain details of the sixth and seventh chapters in this volume. Though the circumstances there treated of had no trivial influence on Sir Walter Scott's history and character, I should have been inclined, for many reasons, to omit them; but the choice was, in fact, not left to me, — for they had been mentioned, and misrepresented, in various preceding sketches of the Life which I had undertaken to illustrate. Such being the case, I considered it as my duty to tell the story truly and intelligibly; but I trust I have avoided unnecessary disclosures; and, after all, there was nothing to disclose that could have attached blame to any of the parties concerned.

For the copious materials which the friends of Sir Walter have placed at my disposal I feel just gratitude. Several of them are named in the course of the present volume; but I must take this opportunity of expressing my sense of the deep obligations under which I have been laid by the frank communications, in particular, of William Clerk, Esq., of Eldin, — John Irving, Esq., W. S., — Sir Adam Ferguson, — James Skene, Esq., of Rubislaw, — Patrick Murray, Esq., of Simprim, — J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., of Rokeby, — William Wordsworth, Esq., — Robert Southey, Esq., Poet Laureate, — Samuel Rogers, Esq., — William Stewart Rose, Esq., — Sir Alexander Wood, — the Right Hon. the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, — the Right Hon. Sir William Rae, Bart., — the late Right Hon. Sir William Knighton, Bart., — the Right Hon. J. W. Croker, — Lord Jeffrey, — Sir Henry Halford, Bart., G. C. H., — the late Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., — Sir Francis Chantrey, R. A., — Sir David Wilkie, R. A., — Thomas Thomson, Esq., P. C. S., — Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., — William Scott, of Raeburn, Esq., — John Scott, of Gala, Esq., — Alexander Pringle, of Whytbank, Esq., M. P., — John

Swinton, of Inverleith-Place, Esq., — John Richardson, Esq., of Fludyer Street, — John Murray, Esq., of Albemarle Street, — Robert Bruce, Esq., Sheriff of Argyle, — Robert Fergusson, Esq., M. D., — G. P. R. James, Esq., — William Laidlaw, Esq., — Robert Cadell, Esq., — John Elliot Shortreed, Esq., — Allan Cunningham, Esq., — Claud Russell, Esq., — James Clarkson, Esq., of Melrose, — the late James Ballantyne, Esq., — Joseph Train, Esq., — Adolphus Ross, Esq., M. D., — William Allan, Esq., R. A., — Charles Dumergue, Esq., — Stephen Nicholson Barber, Esq., — James Slade, Esq., — Mrs. Joanna Baillie, — Mrs. George Ellis, — Mrs. Thomas Scott, — Mrs. Charles Carpenter, — Miss Russell of Ashestiel, — Mrs. Sarah Nicholson, — Mrs. Duncan, Mertoun-Manse, — the Right Hon. the Lady Polwarth, and her sons, Henry, Master of Polwarth, the Hon. and Rev. William, and the Hon. Francis Scott.

I beg leave to acknowledge with equal thankfulness the courtesy of the Rev. Dr. Harwood, Thomas White, Esq., Mrs. Thomson, and the Rev. Richard Garnett, all of Lichfield, and the Rev. Thomas Henry White, of Glasgow, in forwarding to me Sir Walter Scott's early letters to Miss Seward: that of the Lord Seaford, in entrusting me with those addressed to his late cousin, George Ellis, Esq.: and the kind readiness with which whatever papers in their possession could be serviceable to my undertaking were supplied by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and the Lord Montagu; — the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, and the Lord Francis Egerton; — the Lord Viscount Sidmouth, — the Lord Bishop of Llandaff, — the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., — the Lady Louisa Stuart, — the Hon. Mrs. Warrender, and the Hon. Catharine Arden, — Lady Davy, — Miss Edgeworth, — Mrs. Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk, — Mrs. Hughes, of Uffington, — Mrs. Terry now (Richardson), — Mrs. Bartley, — Sir

George Mackenzie of Coul, Bart., — the late Sir Francis Freeling, Bart., — Captain Sir Hugh Pigott, R. N., — the late Sir William Gell, — Sir Cuthbert Sharp, — the Very Rev. Principal Baird, — the Rev. William Steven, of Rotterdam, — the late Rev. James Mitchell, of Wooler, — Robert William Hay, Esq., lately Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, — John Borthwick, of Crookstone, Esq., — John Cay, Esq., Sheriff of Linlithgow, — Captain Basil Hall, R. N., — Thomas Crofton Croker, Esq., — Edward Cheney, Esq., — Alexander Young, Esq., of Harburn, — A. J. Valpy, Esq., — James Maidment, Esq., Advocate, — the late Donald Gregory, Esq., — Robert Johnston, Esq., of Edinburgh,[1] — J. J. Masquerier, Esq., of Brighton, — Owen Rees, Esq., of Paternoster Row,[2] — William Miller, Esq., formerly of Albemarle Street, — David Laing, Esq., of Edinburgh, — and John Smith the Youngest, Esq., of Glasgow.

J. G. LOCKHART.

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[1] Bailie Johnston died 4th April, 1838, in his 73d year.

[2] Mr. Rees retired from the house of Longman and Co. at Midsummer, 1837, and died 5th September following, in his 67th year.

TO

JOHN BACON SAWREY MORRITT

OF ROKEBY PARK, Esq.

THESE MEMOIRS OF HIS FRIEND

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

CHAPTER I

MEMOIR OF THE EARLY LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

ASHESTIEL, April 26, 1808.

THE present age has discovered a desire, or rather a rage, for literary anecdote and private history, that may be well permitted to alarm one who has engaged in a certain degree the attention of the public. That I have had more than my own share of popularity, my contemporaries will be as ready to admit as I am to confess that its measure has exceeded not only my hopes, but my merits, and even wishes. I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life — that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement.

From the lives of some poets a most important moral lesson may doubtless be derived, and few sermons can be read with so much profit as the Memoirs of Burns, of Chatterton, or of Savage. Were I conscious of anything peculiar in my own moral character which could render such development necessary or useful, I would as readily consent to it as I would bequeath my body to dissection, if the operation could tend to point out the nature and the means of curing any peculiar malady. But as my habits of thinking and acting, as well as my rank in society, were fixed long before I had attained, or even pretended to, any poetical reputation,[1] and as it produced, when acquired, no remarkable change upon either, it is hardly to be expected that much information can be derived from minutely investigating frailties, follies, or vices, not very different in number or degree from those of other men in my situation. As I have not been blessed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, I have been happily exempted from the influence of their violent passions, exasperated by the struggle of feelings which rose up against the unjust decrees of fortune. Yet, although I cannot tell of difficulties vanquished, and distance of rank annihilated by the strength of genius, those who shall hereafter read this little Memoir may find in it some hints to be improved, for the regulation of their own minds, or the training those of others.

Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed

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[1] I do not mean to say that my success in literature has not led me to mix familiarly in society much above my birth and original pretensions, since I have been readily received in the first circles in Britain. But there is a certain intuitive knowledge of the world, to which most well-educated Scotchmen are early trained, that prevents them from being much dazzled by this species of elevation. A man who to good nature adds the general rudiments of good breeding, provided he rest contented with a simple and unaffected manner of behaving and expressing himself, will never be ridiculous in the best society, and so far as his talents and information permit, may be an agreeable part of the company. I have therefore never felt much elevated, nor did I experience any violent change in situation, by the passport which my poetical character afforded me into higher company than my birth warranted. — (1826.)

gentle, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient families both by my father's and mother's side. My father's grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Teviotdale by the surname of *Beardie.* He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn, who was third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition *Auld Watt*, of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow — no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. *Beardie*, my great-grandfather aforesaid, derived his cognomen from a venerable beard, which he wore unblemished by razor or scissors, in token of his regret for the banished dynasty of Stuart. It would have been well that his zeal had stopped there. But he took arms, and intrigued in their cause, until he lost all he had in the world, and, as I have heard, run a narrow risk of being hanged, had it not been for the interference of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth. Beardie's elder brother, William Scott of Raeburn, my great-grand-uncle, was killed about the age of twenty-one, in a duel with Pringle of Crichton, grandfather of the present Mark Pringle of Clifton. They fought with swords, as was the fashion of the time, in a field near Selkirk, called from the catastrophe the *Raeburn Meadow-spot.* Pringle fled from Scotland to Spain, and was long a captive and slave in Barbary. *Beardie* became, of course, *Tutor of Raeburn*, as the old Scottish phrase called him — that is, guardian to his infant nephew, father of the present Walter Scott of Raeburn. He also managed the estates of Makerstoun, being nearly related to that family by his mother, Isobel MacDougal. I suppose he had some allowance for his care in either case, and subsisted upon that and the fortune which he had by his wife, a Miss Campbell of Silvercraigs, in the west, through which connection my father used to *call cousin*, as they say, with the Campbells of Blythswood. Beardie was a man of some learning, and a friend of Dr. Pitcairn, to whom his politics probably made him acceptable. They had a Tory or Jacobite club in Edinburgh, in which the conversation is said to have been maintained in Latin. Old Beardie died in a house, still standing, at the northeast entrance to the Churchyard of Kelso, about . . . [November 3, 1729.]

He left three sons. The eldest, Walter, had a family, of which any that now remain have been long settled in America: — the male heirs are long since extinct. The third was William, father of James Scott, well known in India as one of the original settlers of Prince of Wales Island: — he had, besides, a numerous family both of sons and daughters, and died at Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian, about . . .

The second, Robert Scott, was my grandfather. He was originally bred to the sea; but, being shipwrecked near Dundee in his trial voyage, he took such a sincere dislike to that element, that he could not be persuaded to a second attempt. This occasioned a quarrel between him and his father, who left him to shift for himself. Robert was one of those active spirits to whom this was no misfortune. He turned Whig upon the spot, and fairly abjured his father's politics and his learned poverty. His chief and relative, Mr. Scott of Harden, gave him a lease of the farm of Sandy-Knowe, comprehending the rocks in the centre of which Smailholm or Sandy-Knowe Tower is situated. He took for his shepherd an old man called Hogg, who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm. With this sum, which it seems was at the time sufficient for the purpose, the master and servant set off to purchase a stock of sheep at Whitsun-Tryste, a fair held on a hill near Wooler in Northumberland. The old shepherd went carefully from drove to drove, till he found a *hirsel* likely to answer their purpose, and then returned to tell his master to come up and conclude the bargain. But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunter about the racecourse, and to find he had expended the whole stock in this extraordinary purchase! — Moses's bargain of green spectacles did not strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family than my grandfather's rashness into the poor old shepherd. The thing, however, was irretrievable, and they returned without the sheep. In the course of a few days, however, my grandfather, who was one of the best horsemen of his time, attended John Scott of Harden's hounds on this same horse, and displayed him to such advantage that he sold him for double the original price. The farm was now stocked in earnest; and the rest of my grandfather's career was that of successful industry. He was one of the first who were active in the cattle trade, afterwards carried to such extent between the Highlands of Scotland and the leading counties in England, and by his droving transactions acquired a considerable sum of money. He was a man of middle stature, extremely active, quick, keen, and fiery in his temper, stubbornly honest, and so distinguished for his skill in country matters that he was the general referee in all points of dispute which occurred in the neighborhood. His birth being admitted as *gentle* gave him access to the best society in the county, and his dexterity in country sports, particularly hunting, made him an acceptable companion in the field as well as at the table.[1]

Robert Scott of Sandy-Knowe married, in 1728, Barbara Haliburton, daughter of Thomas Haliburton of Newmains, an ancient and respectable family in Berwickshire. Among other patrimonial possessions, they enjoyed the part of Dryburgh, now the property of the Earl of Buchan, comprehending the ruins of the Abbey.

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[1] The present Lord Haddington, and other gentlemen conversant with the south country, remember my grandfather well. He was a fine, alert figure, and wore a jockey cap over his gray hair. — (1826.)

My grand-uncle, Robert Haliburton, having no male heirs, this estate, as well as the representation of the family, would have devolved upon my father, and indeed old Newmains had settled it upon him; but this was prevented by the misfortunes of my grand-uncle, a weak, silly man, who engaged in trade, for which he had neither stock nor talents, and became bankrupt. The ancient patrimony was sold for a trifle (about £3000), and my father, who might have purchased it with ease, was dissuaded by my grandfather, who at that time believed a more advantageous purchase might have been made of some lands which Raeburn thought of selling. And thus we have nothing left of Dryburgh, although my father's maternal inheritance, but the right of stretching our bones where mine may perhaps be laid ere any eye but my own glances over these pages.

Walter Scott, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet. He was the eldest of a large family, several of whom I shall have occasion to mention with a tribute of sincere gratitude. My father was a singular instance of a man rising to eminence in a profession for which nature had in some degree unfitted him. He had indeed a turn for labor, and a pleasure in analyzing the abstruse feudal doctrines connected with conveyancing, which would probably have rendered him unrivalled in the line of a special pleader, had there been such a profession in Scotland; but in the actual business of the profession which he embraced, in that sharp and intuitive perception which is necessary in driving bargains for himself and others, in availing himself of the wants, necessities, caprices, and follies of some, and guarding against the knavery and malice of others, Uncle Toby himself could not have conducted himself with more simplicity than my father. Most attorneys have been suspected, more or less justly, of making their own fortune at the expense of their clients — my father's fate was to vindicate his calling from the stain in one instance, for in many cases his clients contrived to ease him of considerable sums. Many worshipful and be-knighted names occur to my memory, who did him the honor to run in his debt to the amount of thousands, and to pay him with a lawsuit, or a commission of bankruptcy, as the case happened. But they are gone to a different accounting, and it would be ungenerous to visit their disgrace upon their descendants. My father was wont also to give openings, to those who were pleased to take them, to pick a quarrel with him. He had a zeal for his clients which was almost ludicrous: far from coldly discharging the duties of his employment towards them, he thought for them, felt for their honor as for his own, and rather risked disobliging them than neglecting anything to which he conceived their duty bound them. If there was an old mother or aunt to be maintained, he was, I am afraid, too apt to administer to their necessities from what the young heir had destined exclusively to his pleasures. This ready discharge of obligations which the Civilians tell us are only natural and not legal, did not, I fear, recommend him to his employers. Yet his practice was, at one period of his life, very extensive. He understood his business theoretically, and was early introduced to it by a partnership with George Chalmers, Writer to the Signet, under whom he had served his apprenticeship.

His person and face were uncommonly handsome, with an expression of sweetness of temper, which was not fallacious; his manners were rather formal, but full of genuine kindness, especially when exercising the duties of hospitality. His general habits were not only temperate, but severely abstemious; but upon a festival occasion, there were few whom a moderate glass of wine exhilarated to such a lively degree. His religion, in which he was devoutly sincere, was Calvinism of the strictest kind, and his favorite study related to church history. I suspect the good old man was often engaged with Knox and

Spottiswoode's folios, when, immured in his solitary room, he was supposed to be immersed in professional researches. In his political principles he was a steady friend to freedom, with a bias, however, to the monarchical part of our constitution, which he considered as peculiarly exposed to danger during the later years of his life. He had much of ancient Scottish prejudice respecting the forms of marriages, funerals, christenings, and so forth, and was always vexed at any neglect of etiquette upon such occasions. As his education had not been upon an enlarged plan, it could not be expected that he should be an enlightened scholar, but he had not passed through a busy life without observation; and his remarks upon times and manners often exhibited strong traits of practical though untaught philosophy. Let me conclude this sketch, which I am unconscious of having overcharged, with a few lines written by the late Mrs. Cockburn[1] upon the subject. They made one among a set of poetical characters which were given as toasts among a few friends; and we must hold them to contain a striking likeness, since the original was recognized so soon as they were read aloud: —

"To a thing that 's uncommon —
A youth of discretion,
Who, though vastly handsome,
Despises flirtation:
To the friend in affliction,
The heart of affection,
Who may hear the last trump
Without dread of detection."

In [April, 1758] my father married Anne Rutherford, eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh. He was one of those pupils of Boerhaave, to whom the school of medicine in our northern metropolis owes its rise, and a man distinguished for professional talent, for lively wit, and for literary acquirements. Dr. Rutherford was twice married. His first wife, of whom my mother is the sole surviving child, was a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, a family which produced many distinguished warriors during the Middle Ages, and which, for antiquity and honorable alliances, may rank with any in Britain. My grandfather's second wife was Miss Mackay, by whom he had a second family, of whom are now (1808) alive, Dr. Daniel Rutherford, professor of botany in the University of Edinburgh, and Misses Janet and Christian Rutherford, amiable and accomplished women.

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[1] Mrs. Cockburn (born Miss Rutherford of Fairnalie) was the authoress of the beautiful song —

" I have seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling." — (1826.)

My father and mother had a very numerous family, no fewer, I believe, than twelve children, of whom many were highly promising, though only five survived very early youth. My eldest brother (that is, the eldest whom I remember to have seen) was Robert Scott, so called after my uncle, of whom I shall have much to say hereafter. He was bred in the King's service, under Admiral, then Captain William Dickson, and was in most of Rodney's battles. His temper was bold and haughty, and to me was often checkered with what I felt to be capricious tyranny. In other respects I loved him much, for he had a strong turn for literature, read poetry with taste and judgment, and composed verses himself, which had gained him great applause among his messmates. Witness the following elegy upon the supposed loss of the vessel, composed the night before Rodney's celebrated battle of April the 12th, 1782. It alludes to the various amusements of his mess: —

"No more the geese shall cackle on the poop,
  No more the bagpipe through the orlop sound,
No more the midshipmen, a jovial group,
  Shall toast the girls, and push the bottle round.
In death's dark road at anchor fast they stay,
  Till Heaven's loud signal shall in thunder roar;
Then starting up, all hands shall quick obey,
  Sheet home the topsail, and with speed unmoor."

Robert sung agreeably — (a virtue which was never seen in me) — understood the mechanical arts, and when in good humor, could regale us with many a tale of bold adventure and narrow escapes. When in bad humor, however, he gave us a practical taste of what was then man-of-war's discipline, and kicked and cuffed without mercy. I have often thought how he might have distinguished himself, had he continued in the navy until the present times, so glorious for nautical exploit. But the Peace of Paris [Versailles, 1783] cut off all hopes of promotion for those who had not great interest; and some disgust which his proud spirit had taken at harsh usage from a superior officer, combined to throw poor Robert into the East India Company's service, for which his habits were ill adapted. He made two voyages to the East, and died a victim to the climate in . . .

John Scott, my second brother, is about three years older than me. He addicted himself to the military service, and is now brevet-major in the 73rd regiment.[1]

I had an only sister, Anne Scott, who seemed to be from her cradle the butt for mischance to shoot arrows at. Her childhood was marked by perilous escapes from the most extraordinary accidents. Among others, I remember an iron-railed door leading into the area in the centre of George's Square being closed by the wind, while her fingers were betwixt the hasp and staple. Her hand was thus locked in, and must have been smashed to pieces, had not the bones of her fingers been remarkably slight and thin. As it was, the hand was cruelly mangled. On another occasion she was nearly drowned in a pond, or old quarry hole, in what was then called Brown's Park, on the south side of the square. But the most unfortunate accident, and which, though it happened while she was only six years old, proved the remote cause of her death, was her cap accidentally taking fire. The child was alone in the room, and before assistance could be obtained, her head was dreadfully scorched. After a lingering and dangerous illness, she recovered — but never to enjoy perfect health. The slightest cold occasioned swellings in her face, and other indications of a delicate constitution. At length, in [1801], poor Anne was taken ill, and died after a very short interval. Her temper, like that of her brothers, was peculiar, and in her, perhaps, it showed more odd, from the habits of indulgence which her nervous illnesses had formed. But she was at heart an affectionate and kind girl, neither void of talent nor of feeling, though living in an ideal world which she had framed to herself by the force of imagination. Anne was my junior by about a year.

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[1] He was this year made major of the second battalion, by the kind intercession of Mr. Canning at the War Office — 1809. He retired from the army, and kept house with my mother. His health was totally broken, and he died, yet a young man, on 8th May, 1816. — (1826.)

A year lower in the list was my brother Thomas Scott, who is still alive.[1]

Last, and most unfortunate of our family, was my youngest brother, Daniel. With the same aversion to labor, or rather, I should say, the same determined indolence that marked us all, he had neither the vivacity of intellect which supplies the want of diligence, nor the pride which renders the most detested labor better than dependence or contempt. His career was as unfortunate as might be augured from such an unhappy combination; and after various unsuccessful attempts to establish himself in life, he died on his return from the West Indies, in [July, 1806].

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[1] Poor Tom, a man of infinite humor and excellent parts, pursued for some time my father's profession; but he was unfortunate, from engaging in speculations respecting farms and matters out of the line of his proper business. He afterwards became paymaster of the 70th regiment, and died in Canada. Tom married Elizabeth, a daughter of the family of M'Culloch of Ardwell, an ancient Galwegian stock, by whom he left a son, Walter Scott, now second lieutenant of engineers in the East India Company's service, Bombay — and three daughters; Jessie, married to Lieutenant-Colonel Huxley; 2. Anne; 3. Eliza — the two last still unmarried. — (1826.)

Having premised so much of my family, I return to my own story. I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new College. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls *a grand gentleman*.[1] I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed, and, after being chased about the room, was apprehended, and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain.[2] When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted without the slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen who conceived themselves entitled to recommend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to; and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farmhouse of Sandy-Knowe.

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[1] She died in 1810. — (1826.)

[2] [Regarding this illness, see a medical note by Dr. Creighton to the article, "Scott," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.]

An odd incident is worth recording. It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the Devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any farther temptation so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and I have heard became afterwards a lunatic.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcase of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlor in the farmhouse, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Makerstoun, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how,[1] a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-colored coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who resided at Crailing, as factor or land steward for Mr. Scott of Danesfield, then proprietor of that estate.[2] This was during the heat of the American war, and I remember being as anxious on my uncle's weekly visits (for we heard news at no other time) to hear of the defeat of Washington, as if I had had some deep and personal cause of antipathy to him. I know not how this was combined with a very strong prejudice in favor of the Stuart family, which I had originally imbibed from the songs and tales of the Jacobites. This latter political propensity was deeply confirmed by the stories told in my hearing of the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. One or two of our own distant relations had fallen on that occasion, and I remember of detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred. Mr. Curle, farmer at Yetbyre, husband of one of my aunts, had been present at their execution; and it was probably from him that I first heard these tragic tales which made so great an impression on me. The local information, which I conceive had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes — merry men all, of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. Two or three old books which lay in the window seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. Automathes and Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany were my favorites, although at a later period an odd volume of Josephus's Wars of the Jews divided my partiality.

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[1] He was a second cousin of my grandfather's. Isobel MacDougal, wife of Walter, the first Laird of Raeburn, and mother of Walter Scott, called Beardie, was grand-aunt, I take it, to the late Sir George MacDougal. There was always great friendship between us and the Makerstoun family. It singularly happened, that at the burial of the late Sir Henry MacDougal, my cousin William Scott younger of Raeburn, and I myself, were the nearest blood relations present, although our connection was of so old a date, and ranked as pall-bearers accordingly. — (1826.)

[2] My uncle afterwards resided at Elliston, and then took from Mr. Cornelius Elliot the estate of Woollee. Finally he retired to Monklaw in the neighborhood of Jedburgh, where he died, 1823, at the advanced age of ninety years, and in full possession of his faculties. It was a fine thing to hear him talk over the change of the country which he had witnessed. — (1826.)

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visitor, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall, thin, emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is." With this little acidity, which was natural to him, he was a most excellent and benevolent man, a gentleman in every feeling, and altogether different from those of his order who cringe at the tables of the gentry, or domineer and riot at those of the yeomanry. In his youth he had been chaplain in the family of Lord Marchmont — had seen Pope — and could talk familiarly of many characters who had survived the Augustan age of Queen Anne. Though valetudinary, he lived to be nearly ninety, and to welcome to Scotland his son, Colonel William Duncan, who, with the highest character for military and civil merit, had made a considerable fortune in India. In [1795], a few days before his death, I paid him a visit, to inquire after his health. I found him emaciated to the last degree, wrapped in a tartan night-gown, and employed with all the activity of health and youth in correcting a history of the Revolution, which he intended should be given to the public when he was no more. He read me several passages with a voice naturally strong, and which the feelings of an author then raised above the depression of age and declining health. I begged him to spare this fatigue, which could not but injure his health. His answer was remarkable. "I know," he said, "that I cannot survive a fortnight — and what signifies an exertion that can at worst only accelerate my death a few days?" I marvelled at the composure of this reply, for his appearance sufficiently vouched the truth of his prophecy, and rode home to my uncle's (then my abode), musing what there could be in the spirit of authorship that could inspire its votaries with the courage of martyrs. He died within less than the period he assigned — with which event I close my digression.

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits anything but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and, in a word, I, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child — *non sine diis animosus infans.*

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn that our voyage was performed in the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollections of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school, kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronunciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of Douglas, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and above all, to the theatre. The play was As You Like It; and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

The other circumstances I recollect of my residence in Bath are but trifling, yet I never recall them without a feeling of pleasure. The beauties of the parade (which of them I know not), with the river Avon winding around it, and the lowing of the cattle from the opposite hills, are warm in my recollection, and are only rivalled by the splendors of a toy-shop somewhere near the Orange Grove. I had acquired, I know not by what means, a kind of superstitious terror for statuary of all kinds. No ancient Iconoclast or modern Calvinist could have looked on the outside of the Abbey church (if I mistake not, the principal church at Bath is so called) with more horror than the image of Jacob's Ladder, with all its angels, presented to my infant eye. My uncle effectually combated my terrors, and formally introduced me to a statue of Neptune, which perhaps still keeps guard at the side of the Avon, where a pleasure boat crosses to Spring Gardens.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edinburgh, and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe; — and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans, a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns, subsisting upon an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a Captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war, which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my Captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had showed me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the

General's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the Captain. The news of the Saratoga disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran.[1]

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[1] Besides this veteran, I found another ally at Prestonpans, in the person of George Constable, an old friend of my father's, educated to the law, but retired upon his independent property, and generally residing near Dundee. He had many of those peculiarities of temper which long afterwards I tried to develop in the character of Jonathan Oldbuck. It is very odd, that though I am unconscious of anything in which I strictly copied the *manners* of my old friend, the resemblance was nevertheless detected by George Chalmers, Esq., solicitor, London, an old friend, both of my father and Mr. Constable, and who affirmed to my late friend, Lord Kinedder, that I must needs be the author of *The Antiquary*, since he recognized the portrait of George Constable. But my friend George was not so decided an enemy to womankind as his representative Monkbarns. On the contrary, I rather suspect that he had a *tendresse* for my Aunt Jenny, who even then was a most beautiful woman, though somewhat advanced in life. To the close of her life, she had the finest eyes and teeth I ever saw, and though she could be sufficiently sharp when she had a mind, her general behavior was genteel and ladylike. However this might be, I derived a great deal of curious information from George Constable, both at this early period, and afterwards. He was constantly philandering about my aunt, and of course very kind to me. He was the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur, and other characters in Shakespeare. What idea I annexed to them I know not; but I must have annexed some, for I remember quite well being interested on the subject. Indeed, I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend; and therefore, that to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake: set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out. To return to George Constable, I knew him well at a much later period. He used always to dine at my father's house of a Sunday, and was authorized to turn the conversation out of the austere and Calvinistic tone, which it usually maintained on that day, upon subjects of history or auld langsyne. He remembered the forty-five, and told many excellent stories, all with a strong dash of a peculiar caustic humor.

George's sworn ally as a brother antiquary was John Davidson, then Keeper of the Signet; and I remember his flattering and compelling me to go to dine there. A writer's apprentice with the Keeper of the Signet, whose least officer kept us in order! — It was an awful event. Thither, however, I went with some secret expectation of a scantling of good claret. Mr. D. had a son whose taste inclined him to the army, to which his father, who had designed him for the Bar, gave a most unwilling consent. He was at this time a young officer, and he and I, leaving the two seniors to proceed in their chat as they pleased, never once opened our mouths either to them or each other. The Pragmatic Sanction happened

From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of license which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination. She was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Bunyan's Pilgrim, Gessner's Death of Abel, Rowe's Letters, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favor for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another — there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and in the end it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lame-

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unfortunately to become the theme of their conversation, when Constable said in jest, "Now, John, I'll wad you a plack that neither of these two lads ever heard of the Pragmatic Sanction." — "Not heard of the Pragmatic Sanction!" said John Davidson; "I would like to see that;" and with a voice of thunder he asked his son the fatal question. As young D. modestly allowed he knew nothing about it, his father drove him from the table in a rage, and I absconded during the confusion; nor could Constable ever bring me back again to his friend Davidson's. — (1826.)

ness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's Evergreen, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible — the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others — more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1778] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar and a very worthy man.[1] Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his leeway, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which in a posthumous work I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows — to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is, also, from the constitution of the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the mean while, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has nevertheless the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed even for a time among his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning; and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School — or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

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[1] [Lord Cockburn, in his *Life of Jeffrey*, quotes with approval Scott's commendation of Mr. Fraser, and adds, that this teacher had the singular good fortune to turn out from three successive classes Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, and Henry Brougham.]

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. The first *Dux* was James Buchan, who retained his honored place, almost without a day's interval, all the while we were at the High School. He was afterwards at the head of the medical staff in Egypt, and in exposing himself to the plague infection, by attending the hospitals there, displayed the same well-regulated and gentle, yet determined, perseverance which placed him most worthily at the head of his schoolfellows, while many lads of livelier parts and dispositions held an inferior station. The next best scholars (*sed longo intervallo*) were my friend David Douglas, the heir and *élève* of the celebrated Adam Smith, and James Hope, now a Writer to the Signet, both since well known and distinguished in their departments of the law. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions my good-nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favor; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence I had a little party of stanch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head — the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the *yards* than in the *class*.[1]

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[1] I read not long since, in that authentic record called the *Percy Anecdotes*, that I had been educated at Musselburgh school, where I had been distinguished as an absolute dunce; only Dr. Blair, seeing farther into the millstone, had pronounced there was fire in it. I never was at Musselburgh school in my life, and though I have met Dr. Blair at my father's and elsewhere, I never had the good fortune to attract his notice, to my knowledge. Lastly, I was never a dunce, nor thought to be so, but an incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him. — (1826.)

My father did not trust our education solely to our High School lessons. We had a tutor at home, a young man of an excellent disposition, and a laborious student. He was bred to the Kirk, but unfortunately took such a very strong turn to fanaticism, that he afterwards resigned an excellent living in a seaport town, merely because he could not persuade the mariners of the guilt of setting sail of a Sabbath, — in which, by the bye, he was less likely to be successful, as, *cæteris paribus*, sailors, from an opinion that it is a fortunate omen, always choose to weigh anchor on that day. The calibre of this young man's understanding may be judged of by this anecdote; but in other respects he was a faithful and active instructor; and from him chiefly I learned writing and arithmetic. I repeated to him my French lessons, and studied with him my themes in the classics, but not classically. I also acquired, by disputing with him (for this he readily permitted), some knowledge of school divinity and church history, and a great acquaintance in particular with the old books describing the early history of the Church of Scotland, the wars and sufferings of the Covenanters, and so forth. I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead: I was a Tory, and he was a Whig. I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the dark and politic Argyle: so that we never wanted subjects of dispute; but our disputes were always amicable. In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party; nor had my antagonist address enough to turn the debate on such topics. I took up my politics at that period, as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my schoolfellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me; and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honor to vindicate my master's favorable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the first form; and, though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my schoolfellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain. Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity which alone could induce a man who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. As Catholics confide in the imputed righteousness of their saints, so did the good old Doctor plume himself upon the success of his scholars in life, all of which he never failed (and often justly) to claim as the creation, or at least the fruits, of his early instructions. He remembered the fate of every boy at his school during the fifty years he had superintended it, and always traced their success or misfortunes entirely to their attention or negligence when under his care. His "noisy mansion," which to others would have been a melancholy bedlam, was the pride of his heart; and the only fatigues he felt, amidst din and tumult, and the necessity of reading themes, hearing lessons, and maintaining some degree of order at the same time, were relieved by comparing himself to Cæsar, who could dictate to three secretaries at once; — so ready is vanity to lighten the labors of duty.

It is a pity that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow, called Nicol, one of the undermasters, in insulting his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humorist (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns); but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the Rector within an inch of assassination, for he waylaid and knocked him down in the dark. The favor which this worthless rival obtained in the town council led to other consequences, which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness and fair fame. When the French Revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving or condemning it, the Doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural, for as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarce brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however (which was long after my time), passed away with other heats of the period, and the Doctor continued his labors till about a year since, when he was struck with palsy while teaching his class. He survived a few days, but becoming delirious before his dissolution, conceived he was still in school, and after some expressions of applause or censure, he said, "But it grows dark — the boys may dismiss," — and instantly expired.[1]

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismission from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half a year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

At this time she resided in a small house, situated very pleasantly in a large garden, to the eastward of the churchyard of Kelso, which extended down to the Tweed. It was then my father's property, from whom it was afterwards purchased by my uncle. My grandmother was now dead, and my aunt's only companion, besides an old maid-servant, was my cousin, Miss Barbara Scott, now Mrs. Meik. My time was here left entirely to my own disposal, excepting for about four hours in the day, when I was expected to attend the Grammar School of

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[1] [On December 27, 1809, a few days after Dr. Adam's death, Scott writes to Mrs. Thomas Scott: "Poor old Dr. Adam died last week after a very short illness, which first affected him in school. He was light-headed, and continued to speak as in the class until the very last, when, having been silent for many hours, he said, 'That Horace was very well said; *you* did not do it so well;' then added faintly, 'But it grows dark, very dark, the boys may dismiss,' and with these striking words he expired." — *Familiar Letters*, vol. i. p. 154.]

DR. ALEXANDER ADAM

From the painting by Raeburn

the village. The teacher at that time was Mr. Lancelot Whale, an excellent classical scholar, a humorist, and a worthy man. He had a supreme antipathy to the puns which his very uncommon name frequently gave rise to; insomuch, that he made his son spell the word *Wale*, which only occasioned the young man being nicknamed *the Prince of Wales* by the military mess to which he belonged. As for Whale, senior, the least allusion to Jonah, or the terming him an odd fish, or any similar quibble, was sure to put him beside himself. In point of knowledge and taste he was far too good for the situation he held, which only required that he should give his scholars a rough foundation in the Latin language. My time with him, though short, was spent greatly to my advantage and his gratification. He was glad to escape to Persius and Tacitus from the eternal Rudiments and Cornelius Nepos; and as perusing these authors with one who began to understand them was to him a labor of love, I made considerable progress under his instructions. I suspect, indeed, that some of the time dedicated to me was withdrawn from the instruction of his more regular scholars; but I was as grateful as I could be. I acted as usher, and heard the inferior classes, and I spouted the speech of Galgacus at the public examination, which did not make the less impression on the audience that few of them probably understood one word of it.

In the mean while my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me — not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, Eastern stories, romances, etc. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakespeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sat up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favored guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read forever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty: — "No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy; and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favorite passage of poetry, a playhouse ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connection and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time was an acquaintance with Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labor preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period, also, I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie — (whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend) — with Fielding, Smollett, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period, also, I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighborhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song — the ruins of an ancient abbey — the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle — the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste — are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendor, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students, for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar, he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labor as little as I did, and amid the riot of his class I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villainy. Almost all my companions who had left the High School at the same time with myself had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas, had none; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it. A youth who died early, himself an excellent Greek scholar, saw my negligence and folly with pain, instead of contempt. He came to call on me in George's Square, and pointed out in the strongest terms the silliness of the conduct I had adopted, told me I was distinguished by the name of the *Greek Blockhead*, and exhorted me to redeem my reputation while it was called to-day. My stubborn pride received this advice with sulky civility; the birth of my Mentor (whose name was Archibald, the son of an innkeeper) did not, as I thought in my folly, authorize him to intrude upon me his advice. The other was not sharp-sighted, or his consciousness of a generous intention overcame his resentment. He offered me his daily and nightly assistance, and pledged himself to bring me forward with the foremost of my class. I felt some twinges of conscience, but they were unable to prevail over my pride and self-conceit. The poor lad left me more in sorrow than in anger, nor did we ever meet again. All hopes of my progress in the Greek were now over; insomuch that when we were required to write essays on the authors we had studied, I had the audacity to produce a composition in which I weighed Homer against Ariosto, and pronounced him wanting in the balance. I supported this heresy by a profusion of bad reading and flimsy argument. The wrath of the Professor was extreme, while at the same time he could not suppress his surprise at the quantity of out-of-the-way knowledge which I displayed. He pronounced upon me the severe sentence — that dunce I was, and dunce was to remain — which, however, my excellent and learned friend lived to revoke over a bottle of Burgundy, at our literary Club at Fortune's, of which he was a distinguished member.

Meanwhile, as if to eradicate my slightest tincture of Greek, I fell ill during the middle of Mr. Dalzell's second class, and migrated a second time to Kelso — where I again continued a long time reading what and how I pleased, and of course reading nothing but what afforded me immediate entertainment. The only thing which saved my mind from utter dissipation was that turn for historical pursuit, which never abandoned me even at the idlest period. I had forsworn the Latin classics for no reason I know of, unless because they were akin to the Greek; but the occasional perusal of Buchanan's history, that of Matthew Paris, and other monkish chronicles, kept up a kind of familiarity with the language even in its rudest state. But I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet; a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions.

About this period — or soon afterwards — my father judged it proper I should study mathematics, a study upon which I entered with all the ardor of novelty. My tutor was an aged person, Dr. MacFait, who had in his time been distinguished as a teacher of this science. Age, however, and some domestic inconveniences, had diminished his pupils, and lessened his authority amongst the few who remained. I think that, had I been more fortunately placed for instruction, or had I had the spur of emulation, I might have made some progress in this science, of which, under the circumstances I have mentioned, I only acquired a very superficial smattering.

In other studies I was rather more fortunate. I made some progress in Ethics under Professor John Bruce, and was selected, as one of his students whose progress he approved, to read an essay before Principal Robertson.

I was farther instructed in Moral Philosophy at the class of Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose striking and impressive eloquence riveted the attention even of the most volatile student. To sum up my academical studies, I attended the class of History, then taught by the present Lord Woodhouselee, and, as far as I remember, no others, excepting those of the Civil and Municipal Law. So that, if my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman, who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages — let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the College was a desire that I should apply myself particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785–86, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice — far less, as the reader might reasonably have expected,

> "A clerk foredoom'd my father's soul to cross."

The drudgery, indeed, of the office I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also; and among my companions in labor, the only way to gratify ambition was to labor hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the theatre; and this was no trifling incentive to labor. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I, and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books, and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow-apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class; for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination, and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Everything which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my school-tide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends, in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement, if the nature of it had become known. Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

Meanwhile, the translations of Mr. Hoole having made me acquainted with Tasso and Ariosto, I learned from his notes on the latter, that the Italian language contained a fund of romantic lore. A part of my earnings was dedicated to an Italian class which I attended twice a week, and rapidly acquired some proficiency. I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principle of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the Bibliothèque Bleue, and Bibliothèque de Romans, were already familiar to me, and I now acquired similar intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors. I fastened also, like a tiger, upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of James Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald himself, a man of rough manners but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters, besides the privilege of ransacking the stores of old French and Italian books, which were in little demand among the bulk of his subscribers. Here I saw the unfortunate Andrew Macdonald, author of Vimonda; and here, too, I saw at a distance the boast of Scotland, Robert Burns. Of the latter I shall presently have occasion to speak more fully.

I am inadvertently led to confound dates while I talk of this remote period, for, as I have no notes, it is impossible for me to remember with accuracy the progress of studies, if they deserve the name, so irregular and miscellaneous. But about the second year of my apprenticeship my health, which, from rapid growth and other causes, had been hitherto rather uncertain and delicate, was affected by the breaking of a blood-vessel. The regimen I had to undergo on this occasion was far from agreeable. It was spring, and the weather raw and cold, yet I was confined to bed with a single blanket, and bled and blistered till I scarcely had a pulse left. I had all the appetite of a growing boy, but was prohibited any sustenance beyond what was absolutely necessary for the support of nature, and that in vegetables alone. Above all, with a considerable disposition to talk, I was not permitted to open my lips without one or two old ladies who watched my couch being ready at once to souse upon me,

> "imposing silence with a stilly sound."[1]

My only refuge was reading and playing at chess. To the romances and poetry, which I chiefly delighted in, I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events. I was encouraged in this latter study by a tolerable acquaintance with geography, and by the opportunities I had enjoyed while with Mr. MacFait to learn the meaning of the more ordinary terms of fortification. While, therefore, I lay in this dreary and silent solitude, I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of by the childish expedient of arranging shells, and seeds, and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive cross-bows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter I contrived to model a fortress, which, like that of Uncle Toby, represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's Knights of Malta — a book which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me; and Orme's interesting and beautiful History of Indostan, whose copious plans, aided by the clear and luminous explanations of the author, rendered my imitative amusement peculiarly easy. Other moments of these weary weeks were spent in looking at the Meadow Walks, by assistance of a combination of mirrors so arranged that, while lying in bed, I could see the troops march out to exercise, or any other incident which occurred on that promenade.

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[1] [Home's *Douglas.*]

After one or two relapses, my constitution recovered the injury it had sustained, though for several months afterwards I was restricted to a severe vegetable diet. And I must say, in passing, that though I gained health under this necessary restriction, yet it was far from being agreeable to me, and I was affected whilst under its influence with a nervousness which I never felt before or since. A disposition to start upon slight alarms — a want of decision in feeling and acting, which has not usually been my failing — an acute sensibility to trifling inconveniences — and an unnecessary apprehension of contingent misfortunes, rise to my memory as connected with my vegetable diet, although they may very possibly have been entirely the result of the disorder and not of the cure. Be this as it may, with this illness I bade farewell both to disease and medicine; for since that time, till the hour I am now writing, I have enjoyed a state of the most robust health, having only had to complain of occasional headaches or stomachic affections when I have been long without taking exercise, or have lived too convivially — the latter having been occasionally, though not habitually, the error of my youth, as the former has been of my advanced life.

My frame gradually became hardened with my constitution, and being both tall and muscular, I was rather disfigured than disabled by my lameness. This personal disadvantage did not prevent me from taking much exercise on horseback, and making long journeys on foot, in the course of which I often walked from twenty to thirty miles a day. A distinct instance occurs to me. I remember walking with poor James Ramsay, my fellow-apprentice, now no more, and two other friends, to breakfast at Prestonpans. We spent the forenoon in visiting the ruins at Seton, and the field of battle at Preston — dined at Prestonpans on *tiled haddocks* very sumptuously — drank half a bottle of port each, and returned in the evening. This could not be less than thirty miles, nor do I remember being at all fatigued upon the occasion.

These excursions on foot or horseback formed by far my most favorite amusement. I have all my life delighted in travelling, though I have never enjoyed that pleasure upon a large scale. It was a propensity which I sometimes indulged so unduly as to alarm and vex my parents. Wood, water, wilderness itself, had an inexpressible charm for me, and I had a dreamy way of going much farther than I intended, so that unconsciously my return was protracted, and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby[1] (the son of the immortal General), Mr. William Clerk, and some others, to fish in the lake above Howgate, and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate, and fished the whole day; and while we were on our return next morning, I was easily seduced by William Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuik-house, the seat of his family. Here he and John Irving, and I for their sake,

[1] Now Lord Abercromby. — (1826.)

were overwhelmed with kindness by the late Sir John Clerk and his lady, the present Dowager Lady Clerk. The pleasure of looking at fine pictures, the beauty of the place, and the flattering hospitality of the owners, drowned all recollection of home for a day or two. Meanwhile our companions, who had walked on without being aware of our digression, returned to Edinburgh without us, and excited no small alarm in my father's household. At length, however, they became accustomed to my escapades. My father used to protest to me on such occasions that he thought I was born to be a strolling pedlar; and though the prediction was intended to mortify my conceit, I am not sure that I altogether disliked it. I was now familiar with Shakespeare, and thought of Autolycus's song —

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former, of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me, the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise. But show me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated, and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery. If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter, it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, or under some alliance with moral feeling; and even this proficiency has cost me study. — Meanwhile I endeavored to make amends for my ignorance of drawing, by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went, I cut a piece of a branch from a tree — these constituted what I called my log-book; and I intended to have a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut — as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood; the queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston; the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces; the knights from baronial residences; the rooks from royal fortresses; and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.

With music it was even worse than with painting. My mother was anxious we should at least learn Psalmody; but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair.[1] It is only by long practice that I have acquired the power of selecting or distinguishing melodies; and although now few things delight or affect me more than a simple tune sung with feeling, yet I am sensible that even this pitch of musical taste has only been gained by attention and habit, and, as it were, by my feeling of the words being associated with the tune. I have, therefore, been usually unsuccessful in composing words to a tune, although my friend, Dr. Clarke, and other musical composers, have sometimes been able to make a happy union between their music and my poetry.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages, where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me about my seventeenth year into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to anything I could boast.

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[1] The late Alexander Campbell, a warm-hearted man, and an enthusiast in Scottish music, which he sang most beautifully, had this ungrateful task imposed on him. He was a man of many accomplishments, but dashed with a *bizarrerie* of temper which made them useless to their proprietor. He wrote several books — as a *Tour in Scotland*, etc.; — and he made an advantageous marriage, but fell nevertheless into distressed circumstances, which I had the pleasure of relieving, if I could not remove. His sense of gratitude was very strong, and showed itself oddly in one respect. He would never allow that I had a bad ear; but contended, that if I did not understand music, it was because I did not choose to learn it. But when he attended us in George's Square, our neighbor, Lady Cumming, sent to beg the boys might not be all flogged precisely at the same hour, as, though she had no doubt the punishment was deserved, the noise of the concord was really dreadful. Robert was the only one of our family who could sing, though my father was musical, and a performer on the violoncello at the *gentlemen's concerts.* — (1826.)

In the business of these societies — for I was a member of more than one successively — I cannot boast of having made any great figure. I never was a good speaker unless upon some subject which strongly animated my feelings; and, as I was totally unaccustomed to composition, as well as to the art of generalizing my ideas upon any subject, my literary essays were but very poor work. I never attempted them unless when compelled to do so by the regulations of the society, and then I was like the Lord of Castle Rackrent, who was obliged to cut down a tree to get a few fagots to boil the kettle; for the quantity of ponderous and miscellaneous knowledge, which I really possessed on many subjects, was not easily condensed, or brought to bear upon the object I wished particularly to become master of. Yet there occurred opportunities when this odd lumber of my brain, especially that which was connected with the recondite parts of history, did me, as Hamlet says, "yeoman's service." My memory of events was like one of the large, old-fashioned stone-cannons of the Turks — very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot. Such fortunate opportunities of exploding with effect maintained my literary character among my companions, with whom I soon met with great indulgence and regard. The persons with whom I chiefly lived at this period of my youth were William Clerk, already mentioned; James Edmonstoune, of Newton; George Abercromby; Adam Ferguson, son of the celebrated Professor Ferguson, and who combined the lightest and most airy temper with the best and kindest disposition; John Irving, already mentioned; the Honorable Thomas Douglas, now Earl of Selkirk; David Boyle,[1] — and two or three others, who sometimes plunged deeply into politics and metaphysics, and not unfrequently "doffed the world aside, and bid it pass."

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality: but our hearts were warm, our minds honorably bent on knowledge and literary distinction; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading; for — feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy and other branches of regular study — I labored, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, *got up* for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory and acute powers of perception were sometimes detrimental to their possessor by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

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[1] Now Lord Justice-Clerk. — (1826.)

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the Bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice — for I was never very fond of money; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a Writer; and I thought (like a young man) many of them were "ingenio non subeunda meo." The appearance of personal dependence which that profession requires was disagreeable to me; the sort of connection between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature; and, besides, I had seen many sad examples, while overlooking my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The Bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labors of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some particulars if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the Bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardor and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

In the usual course of study, the Roman or Civil Law was the first object of my attention — the second, the Municipal Law of Scotland. In the course of reading on both subjects, I had the advantage of studying in conjunction with my friend William Clerk, a man of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension, and who, should he ever shake loose the fetters of indolence by which he has been hitherto trammelled, cannot fail to be distinguished in the highest degree. We attended the regular classes of both laws in the University of Edinburgh. The Civil Law chair, now worthily filled by Mr. Alexander Irving, might at that time be considered as in *abeyance*, since the person by whom it was occupied had never been fit for the situation, and was then almost in a state of dotage. But the Scotch Law lectures were those of Mr. David Hume, who still continues to occupy that situation with as much honor to himself as advantage to his country. I copied over his lectures twice with my own hand, from notes taken in the class; and when I have had occasion to consult them, I can never sufficiently admire the penetration and clearness of conception which were necessary to the arrangement of the fabric of law, formed originally under the strictest influence of feudal principles, and innovated, altered, and broken in upon by the change of times, of habits, and of manners, until it resembles some ancient castle, partly entire, partly ruinous, partly dilapidated, patched and altered during the succession of ages by a thousand additions and combinations, yet still exhibiting, with the marks of its antiquity, symptoms of the skill and wisdom of its founders, and capable of being analyzed and made the subject of a methodical plan by an architect who can understand the various styles of the different ages in which it was subjected to alteration. Such an architect has Mr.

Hume been to the law of Scotland, neither wandering into fanciful and abstruse disquisitions, which are the more proper subject of the antiquary, nor satisfied with presenting to his pupils a dry and undigested detail of the laws in their present state, but combining the past state of our legal enactments with the present, and tracing clearly and judiciously the changes which took place, and the causes which led to them.

Under these auspices I commenced my legal studies. A little parlor was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers, we went, by way of question and answer, through the whole of Heineccius's Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days — namely, the Civil Law trial on the [30th June, 1791], and the Scots Law trial on the

[6th July, 1792]. On the [11th July, 1792], we both assumed the gown with all its duties and honors.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of near relations, or upon particular occasions, so that I was left to form connections in a great measure for myself. It is not difficult for a youth with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh — or indeed anywhere; and my family connections, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome anywhere, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, "in a concatenation accordingly."

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CHAPTER II

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT. — EDINBURGH. — SANDY-KNOWE. — BATH. — PRESTONPANS

1771–1778

Sir Walter Scott opens his brief account of his ancestry with a playful allusion to a trait of national character, which has, time out of mind, furnished merriment to the neighbors of the Scotch; but the zeal of pedigree was deeply rooted in himself, and he would have been the last to treat it with serious disparagement. It has often been exhibited under circumstances sufficiently grotesque; but it has lent strength to many a good impulse, sustained hope and self-respect under many a difficulty and distress, armed heart and nerve to many a bold and resolute struggle for independence; and prompted also many a generous act of assistance, which under its influence alone could have been accepted without any feeling of degradation.

He speaks modestly of his own descent; for, while none of his predecessors had ever sunk below the situation and character of a gentleman, he had but to go three or four generations back, and thence, as far as they could be followed, either on the paternal or maternal side, they were to be found moving in the highest ranks of our baronage. When he fitted up, in his later years, the beautiful hall of Abbotsford, he was careful to have the armorial bearings of his forefathers blazoned in due order on the compartments of its roof; and there are few in Scotland, under the titled nobility, who could trace their blood to so many stocks of historical distinction.

In the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and Notes to The Lay of the Last Minstrel, the reader will find sundry notices of the "Bauld Rutherfords that were sae stout," and the Swintons of Swinton in Berwickshire, the two nearest houses on the maternal side. An illustrious old warrior of the latter family, Sir John Swinton, extolled by Froissart, is the hero of the dramatic sketch, Halidon Hill; and it is not to be omitted, that through the Swintons Sir Walter Scott could trace himself to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, the poet and dramatist.[1] His respect for the worthy barons of Newmains and Dryburgh, of whom, in right of his father's mother, he was the representative, and in whose venerable sepulchre his remains now rest, was testified by his Memorials of the Haliburtons, a small volume printed (for private circulation only) in the year 1820. His own male ancestors of the family of Harden, whose lineage is traced by Douglas in his Baronage of Scotland back to the middle of the fourteenth century, when they branched off from the great blood of Buccleuch, have been so largely celebrated in his various writings, that I might perhaps content myself with a general reference to those pages, their only imperishable monument. The antique splendor of the ducal house itself has been dignified to all Europe by the pen of its remote descendant; but it may be doubted whether his genius could have been adequately developed, had he not attracted, at an early and critical period, the kindly recognition and support of the Buccleuchs.

The race had been celebrated, however, long before his day, by a minstrel of its own; nor did he conceal his belief that he owed much to the influence exerted over his juvenile mind by the rude but enthusiastic clan-poetry of old *Satchells*, who describes himself *on his title-page* as

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[1] On Sir Walter's copy of *Recreations with the Muses, by William, Earl of Stirling*, 1637, there is the following MS. note: — "Sir William Alexander, sixth Baron of Menstrie, and first Earl of Stirling, the friend of Drummond of Hawthornden and Ben Jonson, died in 1640. His eldest son, William, Viscount Canada, died before his father, leaving one son and three daughters by his wife, Lady Margaret Douglas, eldest daughter of William, first Marquis of Douglas. Margaret, the second of these daughters, married Sir Robert Sinclair of Longformacus in the Merse, to whom she bore two daughters, Anne and Jean. Jean Sinclair, the younger daughter, married Sir John Swinton of Swinton; and Jean Swinton, her eldest daughter, was the grandmother of the proprietor of this volume."

"Captain Walter Scot, an old Souldier and no Scholler,
And one that can write nane,
But just the Letters of his Name."

His True History of several honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot, in the Shires of Roxburgh and Selkirk, and others adjacent, gathered out of Ancient Chronicles, Histories, and Traditions of our Fathers, includes, among other things, a string of complimentary rhymes addressed to the first Laird of Raeburn; and the copy which had belonged to that gentleman was in all likelihood about the first book of verses that fell into the poet's hand.[1] How continually its wild and uncouth doggerel was on his lips to his latest day all his familiars can testify; and the passages which he quoted with the greatest zest were those commemorative of two ancient worthies, both of whom had had to contend against physical misfortune similar to his own. The former of these, according to Satchells, was the immediate founder of the branch originally designed of Sinton, afterwards of Harden:—

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[1] His family well remember the delight which he expressed on receiving, in 1818, a copy of this first edition, a small dark quarto of 1688, from his friend Constable. He was breakfasting when the present was delivered, and said, "This is indeed the resurrection of an old ally — I mind *spelling* these lines." He read aloud the jingling epistle to his own great-great-grandfather, which, like the rest, concludes with a broad hint, that as the author had neither lands nor flocks — "no estate left except his designation" — the more fortunate kinsman who enjoyed, like Jason of old, a fair share of *fleeces,* might do worse than bestow on him some of King James's *broad pieces.* On rising from table, Sir Walter immediately wrote as follows on the blank leaf opposite to poor Satchells' honest title-page —

"I, Walter Scott of Abbotsford, a poor scholar, no soldier, but a soldier's lover,
In the style of my namesake and kinsman do hereby discover,
That I have written the twenty-four letters twenty-four million times over;
And to every true-born Scott I do wish as many golden pieces
As ever were hairs in Jason's and Medea's golden fleeces."

The rarity of the original edition of Satchells is such, that the copy now at Abbotsford was the only one Mr. Constable had ever seen — and no wonder, for the author's *envoy* is in these words: —

"Begone, my book, stretch forth thy wings and fly
Amongst the nobles and gentility;
Thou 'rt not to sell to scavengers and clowns,
But given to worthy persons of renown.
The number 's few I 've printed, in regard
My charges have been great, and I hope reward;
I caus'd not print many above twelve score,
And the printers are engaged that they shall print no more."

> "It is four hundred winters past in order
> Since that Buccleuch was Warden in the Border;
> A son he had at that same tide,
> Which was so lame could neither run nor ride.
> John, this lame son, if my author speaks true,
> He sent him to St. Mungo's in Glasgu,
> Where he remained a scholar's time,
> Then married a wife according to his mind. . . .
> And betwixt them twa was procreat
> Headshaw, Askirk, SINTON, and Glack."

But, if the scholarship of *John the Lamiter* furnished his descendant with many a mirthful allusion, a far greater favorite was the memory of *William the Boltfoot*, who followed him in the sixth generation:—

> "The Laird and Lady of Harden
> Betwixt them procreat was a son
> Called William Boltfoot of Harden."

The emphasis with which this next line was quoted I can never forget:—

> "*He did survive to be* A MAN."

He was, in fact, one of the "prowest knights" of the whole genealogy—a fearless horseman and expert spearman, renowned and dreaded; and I suppose I have heard Sir Walter repeat a dozen times, as he was dashing into the Tweed or Ettrick, "rolling red from brae to brae," a stanza from what he called an old ballad, though it was most likely one of his own early imitations:—

> "To tak the foord he aye was first,
> Unless the English loons were near;
> Plunge vassal than, plunge horse and man,
> Auld Boltfoot rides into the rear."

"From childhood's earliest hour," says the poet in one of his last Journals, "I have rebelled against external circumstances." How largely the traditional famousness of the stalwart *Boltfoot* may have helped to develop this element of his character, I do not pretend to say; but I cannot avoid regretting that Lord Byron had not discovered such another "Deformed Transformed" among his own chivalrous progenitors.

So long as Sir Walter retained his vigorous habits, he used to make an autumnal excursion, with whatever friend happened to be his guest at the time, to the tower of Harden, the *incunabula* of his race. A more picturesque scene for the fastness of a lineage of Border marauders could not be conceived; and so much did he delight in it, remote and inaccessible as its situation is, that, in the earlier part of his life, he had nearly availed himself of his kinsman's permission to fit up the dilapidated *peel* for his summer residence. Harden (the ravine of hares) is a deep, dark, and narrow glen, along which a little mountain brook flows to join the river Borthwick, itself a tributary of the Teviot. The castle is perched on the brink of the precipitous bank, and from the ruinous windows you look down into the crows' nests on the summits of the old mouldering elms, that have their roots on the margin of the stream far below: —

> "Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
> Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
> Through slaty hills, whose sides are shagged with thorn,
> Where springs in scattered tufts the dark-green corn,
> Towers wood-girt Harden far above the vale,
> And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail.
> A hardy race who never shrunk from war,
> The Scott, to rival realms a mighty bar,
> Here fixed his mountain home; — a wide domain,
> And rich the soil, had purple heath been grain;
> But what the niggard ground of wealth denied,
> From fields more bless'd his fearless arm supplied." [1]

[1] Leyden, the author of these beautiful lines, has borrowed, as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* did also, from one of Satchells's primitive couplets —

> "If heather-tops had been corn of the best,
> Then Buccleugh mill had gotten a noble grist."

It was to this wild retreat that the Harden of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, the Auld Wat of a hundred Border ditties, brought home, in 1567, his beautiful bride, Mary Scott, "the Flower of Yarrow," whose grace and gentleness have lived in song along with the stern virtues of her lord. She is said to have chiefly owed her celebrity to the gratitude of an English captive, a beautiful child, whom she rescued from the tender mercies of Wat's moss-troopers, on their return from a foray into Cumberland. The youth grew up under her protection, and is believed to have been the composer both of the words and the music of many of the best old songs of the Border. As Leyden says,

> "His are the strains whose wandering echoes thrill
> The shepherd lingering on the twilight hill,
> When evening brings the merry folding hours,
> And sun-eyed daisies close their winking flowers.
> He lived o'er Yarrow's Flower to shed the tear,
> To strew the holly leaves o'er Harden's bier;
> But none was found above the minstrel's tomb,
> Emblem of peace, to bid the daisy bloom.
> He, nameless as the race from which he sprung,
> Saved other names, and left his own unsung."

We are told that when the last bullock which Auld Wat had provided from the English pastures was consumed, the Flower of Yarrow placed on her table a dish containing a pair of clean spurs; a hint to the company that they must bestir themselves for their next dinner. Sir Walter adds, in a note to the Minstrelsy, "Upon one occasion when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow. 'Harden's *cow!*' echoed the affronted chief; 'is it come to that pass? By my faith they shall soon say Harden's *kye*' (cows). Accordingly, he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with *a bow of kye, and a bassen'd* (brindled) *bull.* On his return with this gallant prey, he passed a very large haystack. It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle; but as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial — '*By my saul, had ye but four feet, ye should not stand lang there.*' In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot.*"

Another striking chapter in the genealogical history belongs to the marriage of Auld Wat's son and heir, afterwards Sir William Scott of Harden, distinguished by the early favor of James VI., and severely fined for his loyalty under the usurpation of Cromwell. The period of this gentleman's youth was a very wild one in that district. The Border clans still made war on each other occasionally, much in the fashion of their forefathers; and the young and handsome heir of Harden, engaging in a foray upon the lands of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, treasurer-depute of Scotland, was overpowered by that baron's retainers, and carried in shackles to his castle, now a heap of ruins, on the banks of the Tweed. Elibank's "doomtree" extended its broad arms close to the gates of his fortress, and the indignant laird was on the point of desiring his prisoner to say a last prayer, when his more considerate dame interposed milder counsels, suggesting that the culprit was born to a good estate, and that they had three unmarried daughters. Young Harden, not, it is said, without hesitation, agreed to save his life by taking the plainest of the three off their hands, and the contract of marriage, executed instantly on the parchment of a drum, is still in the charter-chest of his noble representative.

Walter Scott, the third son of this couple, was the first Laird of Raeburn, already alluded to as one of the patrons of Satchells. He married Isabel Macdougal, daughter of Macdougal of Makerstoun — a family of great antiquity and distinction in Roxburghshire, of whose blood, through various alliances, the poet had a large share in his veins. Raeburn, though the son and brother of two steady Cavaliers, and married into a family of the same political creed, became a Whig, and at last a Quaker; and the reader will find, in one of the notes to The Heart of Mid-Lothian, a singular account of the persecution to which this backsliding exposed him at the hands of both his own and his wife's relations. He was incarcerated (A. D. 1665), first at Edinburgh and then at Jedburgh, by order of the Privy Council — his children were forcibly taken from him, and a heavy sum was levied on his estate yearly, for the purposes of their education beyond the reach of his perilous influence. "It appears," says Sir Walter, in a MS. memorandum now before me, "that the Laird of Makerstoun, his brother-in-law, joined with Raeburn's own elder brother, Harden, in this singular persecution, as it will now be termed by Christians of all persuasions. It was observed by the people that the male line of the second Sir William of Harden became extinct in 1710, and that the representation of Makerstoun soon passed into the female line. They assigned as a cause, that when the wife of Raeburn found herself deprived of her husband, and refused permission even to see her children, she pronounced a malediction on her husband's brother as well as on her own, and prayed that a male of their body might not inherit their property."

The MS. adds, "of the first Raeburn's two sons it may be observed that, thanks to the discipline of the Privy Council, they were both good scholars." Of these sons, Walter, the second, was the poet's great-grandfather, the enthusiastic Jacobite of the autobiographical fragment, — who is introduced,

> "With amber beard and flaxen hair,
> And reverend apostolic air,"

in the epistle prefixed to the sixth canto of Marmion. A good portrait of Bearded Wat, painted for his friend Pitcairn, was presented by the Doctor's grandson, the Earl of Kellie, to the father of Sir Walter. It is now at Abbotsford; and shows a considerable resemblance to the poet. Some verses addressed to the original by his kinsman Walter Scott of Harden are given in one of the Notes to Marmion. The old gentleman himself is said to have written verses occasionally, both English and Latin ; but I never heard more than the burden of a drinking-song —

" Barba crescat, barba crescat,
Donec carduus revirescat."[1]

Scantily as the worthy Jacobite seems to have been provided with this world's goods, he married the daughter of a gentleman of good condition, "through whom," says the MS. memorandum already quoted, "his descendants have inherited a connection with some honorable branches of the *Slioch nan Diarmid*, or Clan of Campbell." To this connection Sir Walter owed, as we shall see hereafter, many of those early opportunities for studying the manners of the Highlanders, to which the world are indebted for Waverley, Rob Roy, and The Lady of the Lake.

Robert Scott, the son of Beardie, formed also an honorable alliance. His father-in-law, Thomas Haliburton,[1] the last but one of the "good lairds of Newmains," entered his marriage as follows in the domestic record, which Sir Walter's pious respect induced him to have printed nearly a century afterwards: — "My second daughter Barbara is married to Robert Scott, son to Walter Scott, uncle to Raeburn, upon this sixteen day of July, 1728, at my house of Dryburgh, by Mr. James Innes, minister of Mertoun, their mothers being cousings; may the blessing of the Lord rest upon them, and make them comforts to each other and to all their relations;" to which the editor of the Memorials adds this note — "May God grant that the prayers of the excellent persons who have passed away may avail for the benefit of those who succeed them! — *Abbotsford*, Nov., 1824."

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[1] Since this book was first published, I have seen in print *A Poem on the Death of Master Walter Scott, who died at Kelso, November 3, 1729*, written, it is said, by Sir William Scott of Thirlestane, Bart., the male ancestor of Lord Napier. It has these lines: —

" His converse breathed the Christian. On his tongue
The praises of religion ever hung ;
Whence it appeared he did on solid ground
Commend the pleasures which himself had found. . . .
His venerable mien and goodly air
Fix on our hearts impressions strong and fair.
Full seventy years had shed their silvery glow
Around his locks, and made his beard to grow ;
That decent beard, which in becoming grace
Did spread a reverend honor on his face," etc. — (1838.)

I need scarcely remind the reader of the exquisite description of the poet's grandfather, in the Introduction to the third canto of Marmion —

——— "the thatched mansion's gray-hair'd sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;

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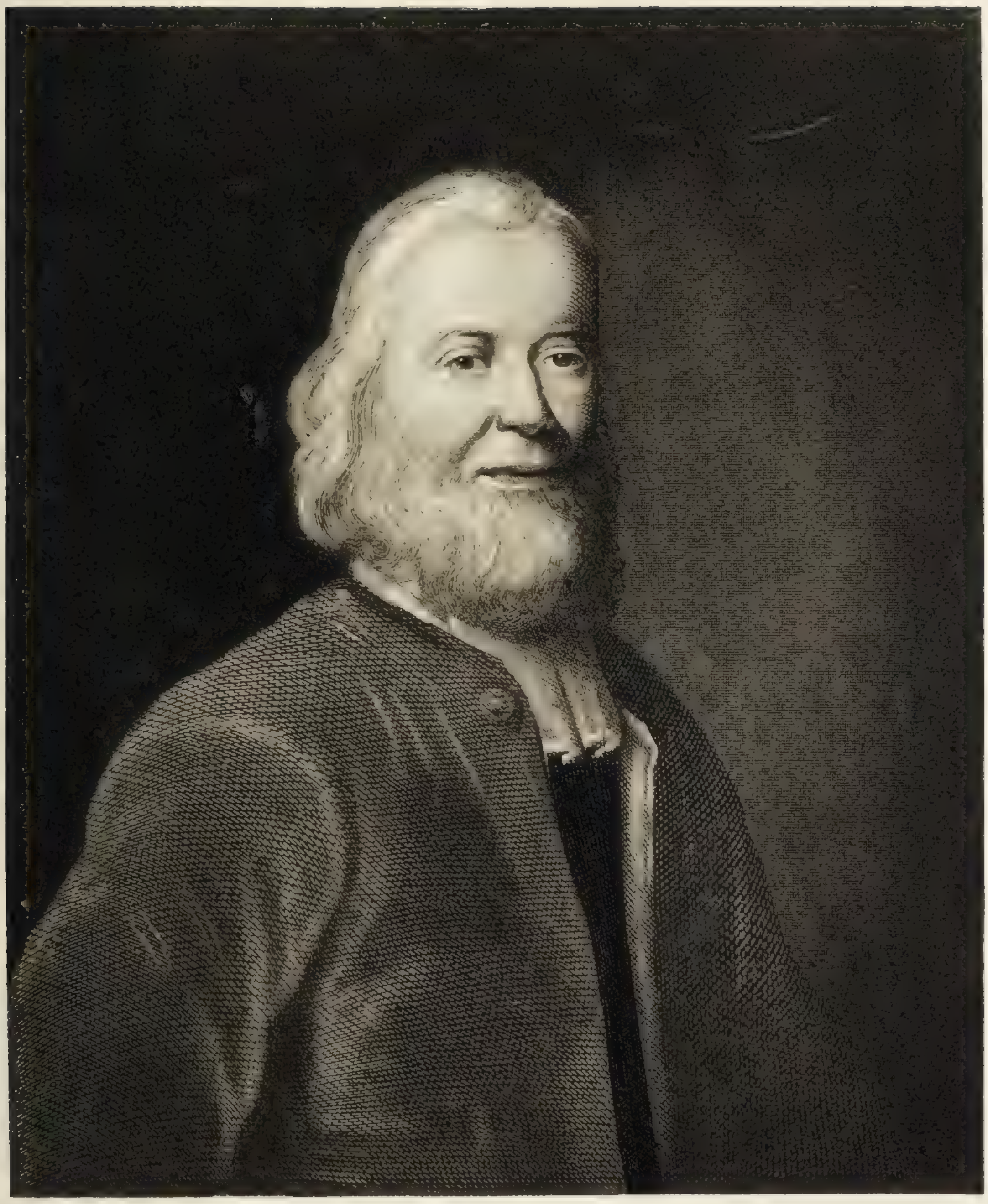
[1] "From the genealogical deduction in the Memorials, it appears that the Haliburtons of Newmains were descended from and represented the ancient and once powerful family of Haliburton of Mertoun, which became extinct in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first of this latter family possessed the lands and barony of Mertoun by a charter granted by Archibald, Earl of Douglas and Lord of Galloway (one of those tremendous lords whose coronets counterpoised the Scottish crown), to Henry de Haliburton, whom he designates as his standard-bearer, on account of his service to the earl in England. On this account the Haliburtons of Mertoun and those of Newmains, in addition to the arms borne by the Haliburtons of Dirleton (the ancient chiefs of that once great and powerful, but now almost extinguished name) — viz. *or*, on a bend *azure*, three mascles of the first — gave the distinctive bearing of a buckle of the second in the sinister canton. These arms still appear on various old tombs in the abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh, as well as on their house at Dryburgh, which was built in 1572." — *MS. Memorandum*, 1820. Sir Walter was served heir to these Haliburtons soon after the date of this Memorandum, and thenceforth quartered the arms above described with those of his paternal family.

WALTER SCOTT ("BEARDIE") GREAT-GRANDFATHER OF SIR WALTER SCOTT



> Whose eye, in age quick, clear, and keen,
> Showed what in youth its glance had been;
> Whose doom discording neighbors sought,
> Content with equity unbought."

In the Preface to Guy Mannering, we have an anecdote of Robert Scott in his earlier days: "My grandfather, while riding over Charterhouse Moor, then a very extensive common, fell suddenly among a large band of gypsies, who were carousing in a hollow surrounded by bushes. They instantly seized on his bridle with shouts of welcome, exclaiming that they had often dined at his expense, and he must now stay and share their cheer. My ancestor was a little alarmed, for he had more money about his person than he cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold, lively spirited man, he entered into the humor of the thing, and sat down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth, that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one, but my relative got a hint from some of the older gypsies, just when 'the mirth and fun grew fast and furious,' and mounting his horse accordingly, he took a French leave of his entertainers." His grandson might have reported more than one scene of the like sort in which he was himself engaged, while hunting the same district, not in quest of foxes or of cattle sales, like the Goodman of Sandy-Knowe, but of ballads for the Minstrelsy. Gypsy stories, as we are told in the same Preface, were frequently in the mouth of the old man when his face "brightened at the evening fire," in the days of the poet's childhood. And he adds that, "as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne as a stately lady in black, adorned with diamonds," so his own memory was haunted with "a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who once made her appearance beneath the thatched roof of Sandy-Knowe, commenced acquaintance by giving him an apple, and whom he looked on, nevertheless, with as much awe as the future doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the Queen." This was Madge Gordon, granddaughter of Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilies.

Of Robert of Sandy-Knowe, also, there is a very tolerable portrait at Abbotsford, and the likeness of the poet to his grandfather must have forcibly struck every one who has seen it. Indeed, but for its wanting some inches in elevation of forehead — (a considerable want, it must be allowed) — the picture might be mistaken for one of Sir Walter Scott. The keen, shrewd expression of the eye, and the remarkable length and compression of the upper lip, bring him exactly before me as he appeared when entering with all the zeal of a professional agriculturist into the merits of a pit of marle discovered at Abbotsford. Had the old man been represented with his cap on his head, the resemblance to one particular phasis of the most changeful of countenances would have been perfect.

Robert Scott had a numerous progeny, and Sir Walter has intimated his intention of recording several of them "with a sincere tribute of gratitude" in the contemplated prosecution of his autobiography. Two of the younger sons were bred to the naval service of the East India Company; one of whom died early and unmarried; the other was the excellent Captain Robert Scott, of whose kindness to his nephew some particulars are given in the Ashestiel fragment, and more will occur hereafter. Another son, Thomas, followed the profession of his father with ability, and retired in old age upon a handsome independence, acquired by his industrious exertions. He was twice married, — first to his near relation, a daughter of Raeburn; and secondly to Miss Rutherford of Know-South, the estate of which respectable family is now possessed by his son Charles Scott, an amiable and high-spirited gentleman, who was always a special favorite with his eminent kinsman. The death of Thomas Scott is thus recorded in one of the MS. notes on his nephew's own copy of the Haliburton Memorials: — "The said Thomas Scott died at Monklaw, near Jedburgh, at two of the clock, 27th January, 1823, in the 90th year of his life, and fully possessed of all his faculties. He read till nearly the year before his death; and being a great musician on the Scotch pipes, had, when on his deathbed, a favorite tune played over to him by his son James, that he might be sure he left him in full possession of it. After hearing it, he hummed it over himself, and corrected it in several of the notes. The air was that called Sour Plums in Galashiels. When barks and other tonics were given him during his last illness, he privately spat them into his handkerchief, saying, as he had lived all his life without taking doctor's drugs, he wished to die without doing so."

I visited this old man two years before his death, in company with Sir Walter, and thought him about the most venerable figure I had ever set my eyes on — tall and erect, with long flowing tresses of the most silvery whiteness, and stockings rolled up over his knees, after the fashion of three generations back. He sat reading his Bible without spectacles, and did not, for a moment, perceive that any one had entered his room, but on recognizing his nephew he rose, with cordial alacrity, kissing him on both cheeks, and exclaiming, "God bless thee, Walter, my man! thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good." His remarks were lively and sagacious, and delivered with a touch of that humor which seems to have been shared by most of the family. He had the air and manner of an ancient gentleman, and must in his day have been eminently handsome. I saw more than once, about the same period, this respectable man's sister, who had married her cousin Walter, Laird of Raeburn — thus adding a new link to the closeness of the family connection. She also must have been, in her youth, remarkable for personal attractions; as it was, she dwells on my memory as the perfect picture of an old Scotch lady, with a great deal of simple dignity in her bearing, but with the softest eye, and the sweetest voice, and a charm of meekness and gentleness about every look and expression; all which contrasted strikingly enough with the stern dry aspect and manners of her husband, a right descendant of the moss-troopers of Harden, who never seemed at his ease but on horseback, and continued to be the boldest fox-hunter of the district, even to the verge of eighty. The poet's aunt spoke her native language pure and undiluted, but without the slightest tincture of that vulgarity which now seems almost unavoidable in the oral use of a dialect so long banished from courts, and which has not been avoided by any modern writer who has ventured to introduce it, with the exception of Scott, and I may add, speaking generally, of Burns. Lady Raeburn, as she was universally styled, may be numbered with those friends of early days whom her nephew has alluded to in one of his prefaces, as preserving what we may fancy to have been the old Scotch of Holyrood.

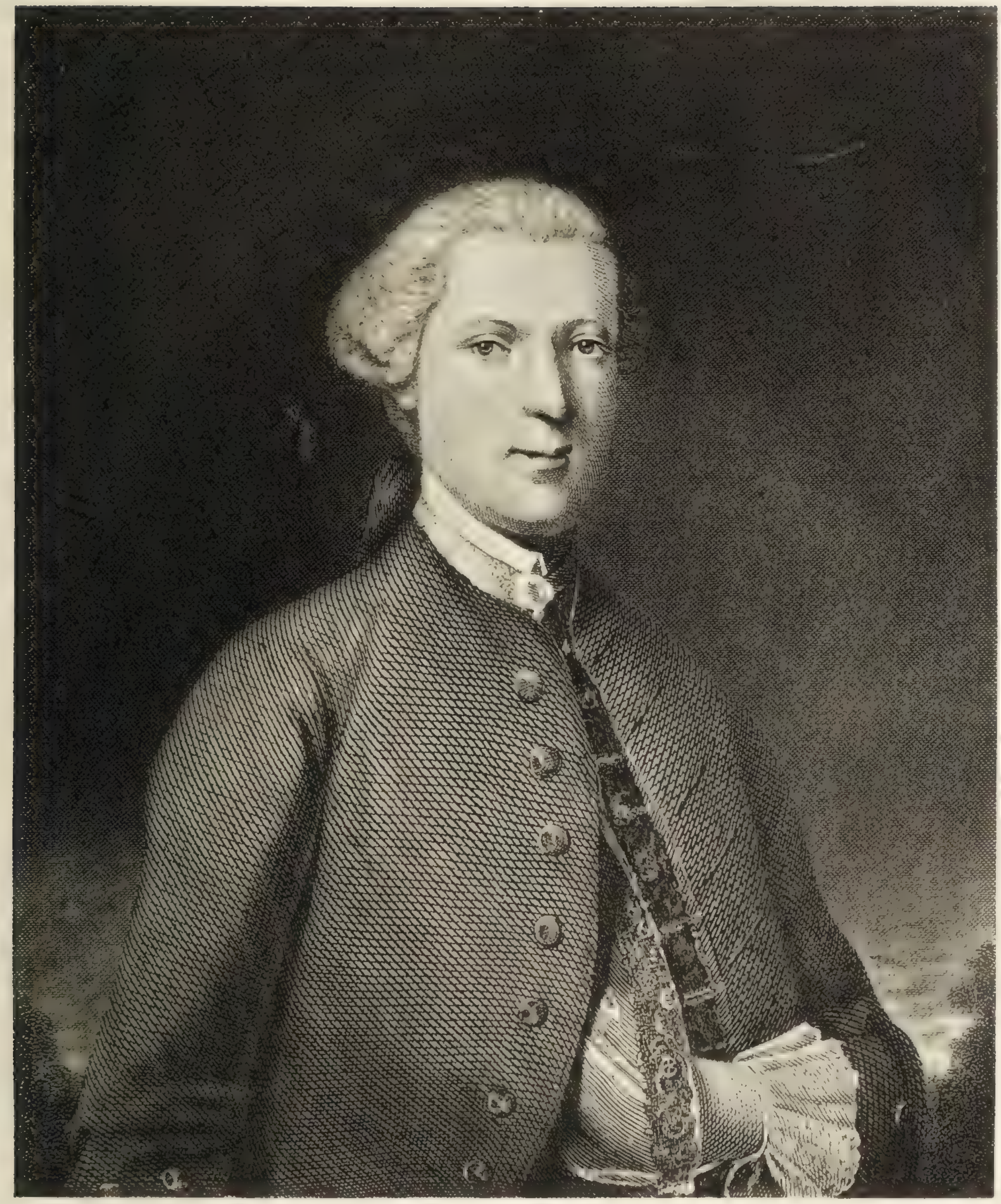
The particulars which I have been setting down may help English readers to form some notion of the structure of society in those southern districts of Scotland. When Satchells wrote, he boasted that Buccleuch could summon to his banner one hundred lairds, all of his own name, with ten thousand more — landless men, but still of the same blood. The younger sons of these various lairds were, through many successive generations, portioned off with fragments of the inheritance, until such subdivision could be carried no farther, and then the cadet, of necessity, either adopted the profession of arms, in some foreign service very frequently, or became a cultivator on the estate of his own elder brother, of the chieftain of his branch, or of the great chief and patriarchal protector of the whole clan. Until the commerce of England and, above all, the military and civil services of the English colonies were thrown open to the enterprise of the Scotch, this system of things continued entire. It still remained in force to a considerable extent at the time when the Goodman of Sandy-Knowe was establishing his children in the world — and I am happy to say, that it is far from being abolished even at the present day. It was a system which bound together the various classes of the rural population in bonds of mutual love and confidence: the original community of lineage was equally remembered on all sides; the landlord could count for more than his rent on the tenant, who regarded him rather as a father or an elder brother, than as one who owed his superiority to mere wealth; and the farmer who, on fit occasions, partook on equal terms of the chase and the hospitality of his landlord, went back with content and satisfaction to the daily labors of a vocation which he found no one disposed to consider as derogating from his gentle blood. Such delusions, if delusions they were, held the natural arrogance of riches in check, taught the poor man to believe that in virtuous poverty he had nothing to blush for, and spread over the whole being of the community the gracious spirit of a primitive humanity.

Walter Scott, the eldest son of Robert of Sandy-Knowe, appears to have been the first of the family that ever adopted a town life, or anything claiming to be classed among the learned professions. His branch of the law, however, could not in those days be advantageously prosecuted without extensive connections in the country; his own were too respectable not to be of much service to him in his calling, and they were cultivated accordingly. His professional visits to Roxburghshire and Ettrick Forest were, in his vigorous life, very frequent; and though he was never supposed to have any tincture either of romance or poetry in his composition, he retained to the last a warm affection for his native district, with a certain reluctant flavor of the old feelings and prejudices of the Borderer. I have little to add to Sir Walter's short and respectful notice of his father, except that I have heard it confirmed by the testimony of many less partial observers. According to every account, he was a most just, honorable, conscientious man; only too high of spirit for some parts of his business. "He passed from the cradle to the grave," says a surviving relation, "without making an enemy or losing a friend. He was a most affectionate parent, and if he discouraged, rather than otherwise, his son's early devotion to the pursuits which led him to the height of literary eminence, it was only because he did not understand what such things meant, and considered it his duty to keep his young man to that path in which good sense and industry might, humanly speaking, be thought sure of success."

Sir Walter's mother was short of stature, and by no means comely, at least after the days of her early youth. She had received, as became the daughter of an eminently learned physician, the best sort of education then bestowed on young gentlewomen in Scotland. The poet, speaking of Mrs. Euphemia Sinclair, the mistress of the school at which his mother was reared, to the ingenious local antiquary, Mr. Robert Chambers, said that "she must have been possessed of uncommon talents for education, as all her young ladies were, in after-life, fond of reading, wrote and spelled admirably, were well acquainted with history and the belles-lettres, without neglecting the more homely duties of the needle and accompt book; and perfectly well-bred in society." Mr. Chambers adds: "Sir W. further communicated that his mother, and many others of Mrs. Sinclair's pupils, were sent afterwards *to be finished off* by the Honorable Mrs. Ogilvie, a lady who trained her young friends to a style of manners which would now be considered intolerably stiff. Such was the effect of this early training upon the

WALTER SCOTT (FATHER OF SIR WALTER SCOTT)

After the painting at Abbotsford



mind of Mrs. Scott, that even when she approached her eightieth year, she took as much care to avoid touching her chair with her back as if she had still been under the stern eye of Mrs. Ogilvie."[1] The physiognomy of the poet bore, if their portraits may be trusted, no resemblance to either of his parents.

Mr. Scott was nearly thirty years of age when he married, and six children, born to him between 1759 and 1766, all perished in infancy.[2] A suspicion that the close situation of the College Wynd had been unfavorable to the health of his family was the motive that induced him to remove to the house which he ever afterwards occupied in George's Square.[3] This removal took place shortly after the poet's birth; and the children born subsequently were in general healthy. Of a family of twelve, of whom six lived to maturity, not one now survives; nor have any of them left descendants, except Sir Walter himself, and his next and dearest brother, Thomas Scott.

He says that his consciousness of existence dated from Sandy-Knowe; and how deep and indelible was the impression which its romantic localities had left on his imagination, I need not remind the readers of Marmion and The Eve of St. John. On the summit of the Crags which overhang the farmhouse stands the ruined tower of Smailholme, the scene of that fine ballad; and the view from thence takes in a wide expanse of the district in which, as has been truly said, every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song:—

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[1] See Chambers's *Traditions of Edinburgh*, vol. ii. pp. 127–131. The functions here ascribed to Mrs. Ogilvie may appear to modern readers little consistent with her rank. Such things, however, were not uncommon in those days in poor old Scotland. Ladies with whom I have conversed in my youth well remembered an *Honorable Mrs. Maitland* who practised the obstetric art in the Cowgate.

[2] In Sir Walter Scott's desk, after his death, there was found a little packet containing six locks of hair, with this inscription in the handwriting of his mother: —

"1. Anne Scott, born March 10, 1759.
2. Robert Scott, born August 22, 1760.
3. John Scott, born November 28, 1761.
4. Robert Scott, born June 7, 1763.
5. Jean Scott, born March 27, 1765.
6. Walter Scott, born August 30, 1766.

"All these are dead, and none of my present family was born till some time afterwards."

[3] [No. 25.]

> "That lady sat in mournful mood,
> Looked over hill and vale,
> O'er Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
> And all down Teviotdale."—

Mertoun, the principal seat of the Harden family, with its noble groves; nearly in front of it, across the Tweed, Lessudden, the comparatively small but still venerable and stately abode of the Lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded with yew-trees as ancient as itself, seem to lie almost below the feet of the spectator. Opposite him rise the purple peaks of Eildon, the traditional scene of Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of Faerie; behind are the blasted peel which the seer of Ercildoune himself inhabited, "the Broom of the Cowdenknowes," the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the eastward, the desolate grandeur of Hume Castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels towards the range of the Cheviot. A few miles westward, Melrose, "like some tall rock with lichens grey," appears clasped amidst the windings of the Tweed; and the distance presents the serrated mountains of the Gala, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such were the objects that had painted the earliest images on the eye of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels.

As his memory reached to an earlier period of childhood than that of almost any other person, so assuredly no poet has given to the world a picture of the dawning feelings of life and genius, at once so simple, so beautiful, and so complete, as that of his epistle to William Erskine, the chief literary confidant and counsellor of his prime of manhood.

"Whether an impulse that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
Of habit, formed in early day,
Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast.
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain. . . .
Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time,
And feelings rous'd in life's first day,
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
It was a barren scene and wild
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power,
And marvelled as the aged hind,
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still with trump and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the windows' rusty bars;
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms —
Of patriot battles won of old
By Wallace Wight and Bruce the Bold —

Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed,
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before." [1]

There are still living in that neighborhood two old women who were in the domestic service of Sandy-Knowe when the lame child was brought thither in the third year of his age. One of them, Tibby Hunter, remembers his coming well; and that "he was a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house." The young ewe-milkers delighted, she says, to carry him about on their backs among the crags; and he was "very gleg (quick) at the uptake, and soon kenned every sheep and lamb by headmark as well as any of them." His great pleasure, however, was in the society of the "aged hind," recorded in the epistle to Erskine. "Auld Sandy Ormistoun," called, from the most dignified part of his function, "the Cow-bailie," had the chief superintendence of the flocks that browsed upon "the velvet tufts of loveliest green." If the child saw him in the morning, he could not be satisfied unless the old man would set him astride on his shoulder, and take him to keep him company as he lay watching his charge.

"Here was poetic impulse given
By the green hill and clear blue heaven."

The Cow-bailie blew a particular note on his whistle, which signified to the maid-servants in the house below when the little boy wished to be carried home again. He told his friend, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, when spending a summer day in his old age among these well-remembered crags, that he delighted to roll about on the grass all day long in the midst of the flock, and that "the sort of fellowship he thus formed with the sheep and lambs had impressed his mind with a degree of affectionate feeling towards them which had lasted throughout life." There is a story of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunderstorm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, "Bonny! bonny!" at every flash.

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[1] [*Poetical Works*, Cambridge Edition, p. 108.]

I find the following marginal note on his copy of Allan Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany (edition 1724): "This book belonged to my grandfather, Robert Scott, and out of it I was taught Hardiknute by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt — the last I shall ever forget." According to Tibby Hunter, he was not particularly fond of his book, embracing every pretext for joining his friend the Cowbailie out of doors; but "Miss Jenny was a grand hand at keeping him to the bit, and by degrees he came to read brawly."[1] An early acquaintance of a higher class, Mrs. Duncan, the wife of the present excellent minister of Mertoun, informs me, that though she was younger than Sir Walter, she has a dim remembrance of the interior of Sandy-Knowe — "Old Mrs. Scott sitting, with her spinning-wheel, at one side of the fire, in a *clean clean* parlor; the grandfather, a good deal failed, in his elbow-chair opposite; and the little boy lying on the carpet, at the old man's feet, listening to the Bible, or whatever good book Miss Jenny was reading to them."[2]

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[1] This old woman still possesses "the *banes*" (bones) — that is to say, the boards — of a Psalm-book, which Master Walter gave her at Sandy-Knowe. "He chose it," she says, "of a very large print, that I might be able to read it when I was *very auld — forty year auld;* but the bairns pulled the leaves out langsyne."

[2] [In writing of his little grandson's earliest lessons, Scott recalls these days in a letter to Lockhart (March 3, 1826): —

"I rejoice to hear of Johnnie's grand flip towards instruction. I hope Mrs. Mactavish, whom I like not the worse, you may be sure, for her name, will be mild in her rule, and let him listen to reading a good deal

Robert Scott died before his grandson was four years of age; and I heard him mention when he was an old man that he distinctly remembered the writing and sealing of the funeral letters, and all the ceremonial of the melancholy procession as it left Sandy-Knowe. I shall conclude my notices of the residence at Sandy-Knowe with observing that in Sir Walter's account of the friendly clergyman who so often sat at his grandfather's fireside, we cannot fail to trace many features of the secluded divine in the novel of St. Ronan's Well.

I have nothing to add to what he has told us of that excursion to England which interrupted his residence at Sandy-Knowe for about a twelvemonth, except that I had often been astonished, long before I read his autobiographic fragment, with the minute recollection he seemed to possess of all the striking features of the city of Bath, which he had never seen again since he quitted it before he was six years of age. He has himself alluded, in his Memoir, to the lively recollection he retained of his first visit to the theatre, to which his Uncle Robert carried him to witness a representation of As You Like It. In his reviewal of the Life of John Kemble, written in 1826, he has recorded that impression more fully, and in terms so striking, that I must copy them in this place: —

> "There are few things which those gifted with any degree of imagination recollect with a sense of more anxious and mysterious delight than the first dramatic representation which they have witnessed. The unusual form of the house, filled with such

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without cramming the alphabet and grammar down the poor child's throat. I cannot at this moment tell how or when I learned to read, but it was by fits and snatches, as one aunt or another in the old rumble-tumble farmhouses could give me a lesson, and I am sure it increased my love and habit of reading more than the austerities of a school could have done. I gave trouble, I believe, in wishing to be taught, and in self-defence gradually acquired the mystery myself. Johnnie is infirm a little, though not so much so as I was, and often he has brought back to my recollection the days of my own childhood. I hope he will be twice any good that was in me, with less carelessness." — Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, vol. i. p. 397.]

groups of crowded spectators, themselves forming an extraordinary spectacle to the eye which has never witnessed it before, yet all intent upon that wide and mystic curtain, whose dusky undulations permit us now and then to discern the momentary glitter of some gaudy form, or the spangles of some sandalled foot, which trips lightly within: Then the light, brilliant as that of day; then the music, which, in itself a treat sufficient in every other situation, our inexperience mistakes for the very play we came to witness; then the slow rise of the shadowy curtain, disclosing, as if by actual magic, a new land, with woods, and mountains, and lakes, lighted, it seems to us, by another sun, and inhabited by a race of beings different from ourselves, whose language is poetry, — whose dress, demeanor, and sentiments seem something supernatural, — and whose whole actions and discourse are calculated not for the ordinary tone of everyday life, but to excite the stronger and more powerful faculties — to melt with sorrow, overpower with terror, astonish with the marvellous, or convulse with irresistible laughter: — all these wonders stamp indelible impressions on the memory. Those mixed feelings, also, which perplex us between a sense that the scene is but a plaything, and an interest which ever and anon surprises us into a transient belief that that which so strongly affects us cannot be fictitious; those mixed and puzzling feelings, also, are exciting in the highest degree. Then there are the bursts of applause, like distant thunder, and the permission afforded to clap our little hands, and add our own scream of delight to a sound so commanding. All this, and much, much more, is fresh in our memory, although, when we felt these sensations, we looked on the stage which Garrick had not yet left. It is now a long while since; yet we have not passed many hours of such unmixed delight, and we still remember the sinking lights, the dispersing crowd, with the vain longings which we felt that the music would again sound, the magic curtain once more arise, and the enchanting dream recommence; and the astonishment with which we looked upon the apathy of the elder part of our company, who, having the means, did not spend every evening in the theatre."[1]

Probably it was this performance that first tempted him to open the page of Shakespeare. Before he returned to Sandy-Knowe, assuredly, notwithstanding the modest language of his autobiography, the progress which had been made in his intellectual education was extraordinary; and it is impossible to doubt that his hitherto almost sole tutoress, Miss Jenny Scott, must have been a woman of tastes and acquirements very far above what could have been often found among Scotch ladies, of any but the highest class at least, in that day. In the winter of 1777, she and her charge spent some few weeks — not happy weeks, the Memoir hints them to have been — in George's Square, Edinburgh; and it so happened, that during this little interval, Mr. and Mrs. Scott received in their domestic circle a guest capable of appreciating, and, fortunately for us, of recording in a very striking manner the remarkable development of young Walter's faculties. Mrs. Cockburn, mentioned by him in his Memoir as the authoress of the modern Flowers of the Forest, born a Rutherford, of Fairnalie, in Selkirkshire, was distantly related to the poet's mother, with whom she had through life been in habits of intimate friendship. This accomplished woman was staying at Ravelston, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, a seat of the Keiths of Dunnottar, nearly related to Mrs. Scott, and to herself. With some of that family she spent an evening in George's Square. She chanced to be writing next day to Dr. Douglas, the well-known and much respected minister of her native parish, Galashiels; and her letter, of which the Doctor's son has kindly given me a copy, contains the following passage: —

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[1] *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xx. p. 154.

"Edinburgh, Saturday night, 15th of 'the gloomy month when the people of England hang and drown themselves.'

. . . "I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. 'There 's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash it goes! — they will all perish!' After his agitation, he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. One of his observations was, 'How strange it is that Adam, just new come into the world, should know everything — that must be the poet's fancy,' says he. But when he was told he was created perfect by God, he instantly yielded. When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. 'What lady?' says she. 'Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso like myself.' 'Dear Walter,' says Aunt Jenny, 'what is a virtuoso?' 'Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything.'[1] — Now, sir, you will think this a very silly story. Pray, what age do you suppose this boy to be? Name it now, before I tell you. Why, twelve or fourteen. No such thing; he is not quite six years old.[2] He has a lame leg, for which he was a year at Bath, and has acquired the perfect English accent, which he has not lost since he came, and he reads like a Garrick. You will allow this an uncommon exotic."

Some particulars in Mrs. Cockburn's account appear considerably at variance with what Sir Walter has told us respecting his own boyish proficiency — especially in the article of pronunciation. On that last head, however, Mrs. Cockburn was not, probably, a very accurate judge; all that can be said is, that if at this early period he had acquired anything which could be justly described as an English accent, he soon lost, and never again recovered, what he had thus gained from his short residence at Bath. In after-life his pronunciation of words, considered separately, was seldom much different from that of a well-educated Englishman of his time; but he used many words in a sense which belonged to Scotland, not to England, and the tone and accent remained broadly Scotch, though, unless in the *burr*, which no doubt smacked of the country bordering on Northumberland, there was no *provincial* peculiarity about his utterance. He had strong powers of mimicry — could talk with a peasant quite in his own style, and frequently in general society introduced rustic *patois*, northern, southern, or midland, with great truth and effect; but these things were inlaid dramatically, or playfully, upon his narrative. His exquisite taste in this matter was not less remarkable in his conversation than in the prose of his Scotch novels.

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[1] It may amuse my reader to recall, by the side of Scott's early definition of "a virtuoso," the lines in which Akenside has painted that character — lines which might have been written for a description of the Author of *Waverley*: —

> "He knew the various modes of ancient times,
> Their arts and fashions of each various guise;
> Their weddings, funerals, punishments of crimes;
> Their strength, their learning eke, and rarities.
> Of old habiliment, each sort and size,
> Male, female, high and low, to him were known;
> Each gladiator's dress, and stage disguise,
> With learned clerkly phrase he could have shown."

[2] He was, in fact, six years and three months old before this letter was written.

Another lady, nearly connected with the Keiths of Ravelston, has a lively recollection of young Walter, when paying a visit much about the same period to his kind relation,[1] the mistress of that picturesque old mansion, which furnished him in after-days with many of the features of his Tully-Veolan, and whose venerable gardens, with their massive hedges of yew and holly, he always considered as the ideal of the art. The lady, whose letter I have now before me, says she distinctly remembers the sickly boy sitting at the gate of the house with his attendant, when a poor mendicant approached, old and woe-begone, to claim the charity which none asked for in vain at Ravelston. When the man was retiring, the servant remarked to Walter that he ought to be thankful to Providence for having placed him above the want and misery he had been contemplating. The child looked up with a half-wistful, half-incredulous expression, and said, "*Homer was a beggar!*" "How do you know that?" said the other. "Why, don't you remember," answered the little virtuoso, "that

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[1] Mrs. Keith of Ravelston was born a Swinton of Swinton, and sister to Sir Walter's maternal grandmother.

> 'Seven *Roman* cities strove for Homer dead,
> Through which the living Homer begged his bread?'"

The lady smiled at the "*Roman* cities," — but already

> "Each blank in faithless memory void
> The poet's glowing thought supplied."

It was in this same year, 1777, that he spent some time at Prestonpans; made his first acquaintance with George Constable, the original of his Monkbarns; explored the field where Colonel Gardiner received his death-wound, under the learned guidance of Dalgetty; and marked the spot "where the grass long grew rank and green, distinguishing it from the rest of the field,"[1] above the grave of poor Balmawhapple.

His Uncle Thomas, whom I have described as I saw him in extreme old age at Monklaw, had the management of the farm affairs at Sandy-Knowe, when Walter returned thither from Prestonpans; he was a kind-hearted man, and very fond of the child. Appearing on his return somewhat strengthened, his uncle promoted him from the Cow-bailie's shoulder to a dwarf of the Shetland race, not so large as many a Newfoundland dog. This creature walked freely into the house, and was regularly fed from the boy's hand. He soon learned to sit her well, and often alarmed Aunt Jenny, by cantering over the rough places about the tower. In the evening of his life, when he had a grandchild afflicted with an infirmity akin to his own, he provided him with a little mare of the same breed, and gave her the name of *Marion*, in memory of this early favorite.

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[1] *Waverley*, chap. xlvii. note.

CHAPTER III

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTINUED. — HIGH SCHOOL OF EDINBURGH. — RESIDENCE AT KELSO

1778–1783

THE report of Walter's progress in horsemanship probably reminded his father that it was time he should be learning other things beyond the department either of Aunt Jenny or Uncle Thomas, and after a few months he was recalled to Edinburgh. But extraordinary as was the progress he had by this time made in that self-education which alone is of primary consequence to spirits of his order, he was found too deficient in lesser matters to be at once entered in the High School. Probably his mother dreaded, and deferred as long as she could, the day when he should be exposed to the rude collision of a crowd of boys. At all events he was placed first in a little private school kept by one Leechman in Bristo Port; and then, that experiment not answering expectation, under the domestic tutorage of Mr. James French, afterwards minister of East Kilbride in Lanarkshire. This respectable man considered him fit to join Luke Fraser's class in October, 1778.

His own account of his progress at this excellent seminary is, on the whole, very similar to what I have received from some of his surviving schoolfellows. His quick apprehension and powerful memory enabled him, at little cost of labor, to perform the usual routine of tasks, in such a manner as to keep him generally "in a decent place" (so he once expressed it to Mr. Skene) "about the middle of the class; with which," he continued, "I was the better contented, that it chanced to be near the fire."[1] Mr. Fraser was, I believe, more zealous in enforcing attention to the technicalities of grammar, than to excite curiosity about historical facts, or imagination to strain after the flights of a poet. There is no evidence that Scott, though he speaks of him as his "kind master," in remembrance probably of sympathy for his physical infirmities, ever attracted his special notice with reference to scholarship; but Adam, the Rector, into whose class he passed in October, 1782, was, as his situation demanded, a teacher of a more liberal caste; and though never, even under his guidance, did Walter fix and concentrate his ambition so as to maintain an eminent place, still the vivacity of his talents was observed, and the readiness of his memory in particular was so often displayed, that (as Mr. Irving, his chosen friend of that day, informs me) the Doctor "would constantly refer to him for dates, the particulars of battles, and other remarkable events alluded to in Horace, or whatever author the boys were reading, and used to call him the historian of the class." No one who has read, as few have not, Dr. Adam's interesting work on Roman Antiquities will doubt the author's capacity for stimulating such a mind as young Scott's.

He speaks of himself as occasionally "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." His schoolfellow, Mr. Claud Russell, remembers that he once made a great leap in consequence of the stupidity of some laggard on what is called the *dult's* (dolt's) bench, who being asked, on boggling at *cum*, "what part of speech is *with?*" answered, "*a substantive.*" The Rector, after a moment's pause, thought it worth while to ask his *dux* — "Is *with* ever a substantive?" but all were silent until the query reached Scott, then near the bottom of the class, who instantly responded by quoting a verse of the book of Judges: — "And Samson said unto Delilah, If they bind me with seven green *withs* that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and as another man."[1] Another upward movement, accomplished in a less laudable manner, but still one strikingly illustrative of his ingenious resources, I am enabled to preserve through the kindness of a brother poet and esteemed friend, to whom Sir Walter himself communicated it in the melancholy twilight of his bright day.

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[1] According to Mr. Irving's recollections, Scott's place, after the first winter, was usually between the 7th and the 15th from the top of the class. He adds, " Dr. James Buchan was always the *dux;* David Douglas (Lord Reston) *second;* and the present Lord Melville *third.*"

Mr. Rogers says — "Sitting one day alone with him in your house, in the Regent's Park — (it was the day but one before he left it to embark at Portsmouth for Malta) — I led him, among other things, to tell me once again a story of himself, which he had formerly told me, and which I had often wished to recover. When I returned home, I wrote it down, as nearly as I could, in his own words; and here they are. The subject is an achievement worthy of Ulysses himself, and such as many of his schoolfellows could, no doubt, have related of him; but I fear I have done it no justice, though the story is so very characteristic that it should not be lost. The inimitable manner in which he told it — the glance of the eye, the turn of the head, and the light that played over his faded features, as, one by one, the circumstances came back to him, accompanied by a thousand boyish feelings, that had slept perhaps for years — there is no language, not even his own, could convey to you; but you can supply them. Would that others could do so, who had not the good fortune to know him! — The memorandum (Friday, October 21, 1831) is as follows: —

"There was a boy in my class at school, who stood always at the top,[2] nor could I with all my efforts supplant him. Day came after day, and still he kept his place, do what I would; till at length I observed that, when a question was asked him, he always fumbled with his fingers at a particular button in the lower part of his waistcoat. To remove it, therefore, became expedient in my eyes; and in an evil moment it was removed with a knife. Great was my anxiety to know the success of my measure; and it succeeded too well. When the boy was again questioned, his fingers sought again for the button, but it was not to be found. In his distress he looked down for it; it was to be seen no more than to be felt. He stood confounded, and I took possession of his place; nor did he ever recover it, or ever, I believe, suspect who was the author of his wrong. Often in after-life has the sight of him smote me as I passed by him; and often have I resolved to make him some reparation; but it ended in good resolutions. Though I never renewed my acquaintance with him, I often saw him, for he filled some inferior office in one of the courts of law at Edinburgh. Poor fellow! I believe he is dead; he took early to drinking."

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[1] Chap. xvi. verse 7.

[2] Mr. Irving inclines to think that this incident must have occurred during Scott's attendance on Luke Fraser, not after he went to Dr. Adam; and he also suspects that the boy referred to sat at the top, not of the *class*, but of Scott's own bench or division of the class.

The autobiography tells us that his translations in verse from Horace and Virgil were often approved by Dr. Adam. One of these little pieces, written in a weak boyish scrawl, within pencilled marks still visible, had been carefully preserved by his mother; it was found folded up in a cover inscribed by the old lady — "*My Walter's first lines*, 1782."

"In awful ruins Ætna thunders nigh,
And sends in pitchy whirlwinds to the sky
Black clouds of smoke, which, still as they aspire,
From their dark sides there bursts the glowing fire;
At other times huge balls of fire are toss'd,
That lick the stars, and in the smoke are lost:
Sometimes the mount, with vast convulsions torn,
Emits huge rocks, which instantly are borne
With loud explosions to the starry skies,
The stones made liquid as the huge mass flies,
Then back again with greater weight recoils,
While Ætna thundering from the bottom boils."

I gather from Mr. Irving that these lines were considered as the second best set of those produced on the occasion — Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, through life Scott's dear friend, carrying off the premium.

In his Introduction to the Lay, he alludes to an original effusion of these "schoolboy days," prompted by a thunderstorm, which he says "was much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife, who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was copied from an old magazine. I never" (he continues) "forgave the imputation, and even now I acknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She indeed accused me unjustly when she said I had stolen my poem ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right. I made one or two faint attempts at verse after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife, but some friend or other always advised me to put my verses into the fire; and, like Dorax in the play, I submitted, though with a swelling heart." These lines, and another short piece "On the Setting Sun," were lately found wrapped up in a cover, inscribed by Dr. Adam, "Walter Scott, July, 1783," and have been kindly transmitted to me by the gentleman who discovered them.

ON A THUNDERSTORM.

"Loud o'er my head though awful thunders roll,
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Yet 't is thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,
Thy arm directs those lightnings through the sky.
Then let the good thy mighty name revere,
And hardened sinners thy just vengeance fear."

ON THE SETTING SUN.

"Those evening clouds, that setting ray
And beauteous tints, serve to display
  Their great Creator's praise;
Then let the short-lived thing call'd man,

Whose life 's comprised within a span,
  To Him his homage raise.

"We often praise the evening clouds,
  And tints so gay and bold,
But seldom think upon our God,
  Who tinged these clouds with gold!"[1]

It must, I think, be allowed that these lines, though of the class to which the poet himself modestly ascribes them, and not to be compared with the efforts of Pope, still less of Cowley at the same period, show, nevertheless, praiseworthy dexterity for a boy of twelve.

The fragment tells us that on the whole he was "more distinguished in *the yards* (as the High School playground was called) than in *the class;*" and this, not less than the intellectual advancement which years before had excited the admiration of Mrs. Cockburn, was the natural result of his lifelong "rebellion against external circumstances." He might now with very slender exertion have been the *dux* of his form; but if there was more difficulty, there was also more to whet his ambition, in the attempt to overcome the disadvantages of his physical misfortune, and in spite of them assert equality with the best of his compeers on the ground which they considered as the true arena of honor. He told me, in walking through these same *yards* forty years afterwards, that he had scarcely made his first appearance there, before some dispute arising, his opponent remarked that "there was no use to hargle-bargle with a cripple;" upon which he replied, that if he might fight *mounted*, he would try his hand with any one of his inches. "An elder boy," said he, "who had perhaps been chuckling over our friend

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[1] I am obliged for these little memorials to the Rev. W. Steven of Rotterdam, author of an interesting book on the history of the branch of the Scotch Church long established in Holland, and still flourishing under the protection of the enlightened government of that country. Mr. Steven found them in the course of his recent researches, undertaken with a view to some memoirs of the High School of Edinburgh, at which he had received his own early education.

Roderick Random when his mother supposed him to be in full cry after Pyrrhus or Porus, suggested that the two little tinklers might be lashed front to front upon a deal board — and — 'O gran bonta de' cavalier antichi' — the proposal being forthwith agreed to, I received my first bloody nose in an attitude which would have entitled me, in the blessed days of personal cognizances, to assume that of a *lioncel seiant gules*. My pugilistic trophies here," he continued, "were all the results of such *sittings in banco*." Considering his utter ignorance of fear, the strength of his chest and upper limbs, and that the scientific part of pugilism never flourished in Scotland, I dare say these trophies were not few.

The mettle of the High School boys, however, was principally displayed elsewhere than in their own *yards;* and Sir Walter has furnished us with ample indications of the delight with which he found himself at length capable of rivalling others in such achievements as required the exertion of active locomotive powers. Speaking of some scene of his infancy in one of his latest tales, he says — "Every step of the way after I have passed through the green already mentioned" (probably the *Meadows* behind George's Square) "has for me something of an early remembrance. There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's-maid upbraiding me with my infirmity as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps which my brothers traversed with shout and bound. I remember the *suppressed bitterness* of the moment, and, conscious of my own infirmity, the envy with which I regarded the easy movements and elastic steps of my more happily formed brethren. Alas!" he adds, "these goodly barks have all perished in life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed, as the naval phrase goes, so little seaworthy, has reached the port when the tempest is over." How touching to compare with this passage that in which he records his pride in being found before he left the High School one of the boldest and nimblest climbers of "the kittle nine stanes," a passage of difficulty which might puzzle a chamois-hunter of the Alps, its steps, "few and far between," projected high in air from the precipitous black granite of the Castle rock. But climbing and fighting could sometimes be combined, and he has in almost the same page dwelt upon perhaps the most favorite of all these juvenile exploits — namely, "the manning of the Cowgate Port," — in the season when snowballs could be employed by the young scorners of discipline for the annoyance of the Town-guard. To understand fully the feelings of a High School boy of that day with regard to those ancient Highlanders, who then formed the only police of the city of Edinburgh, the reader must consult the poetry of the scapegrace Fergusson. It was in defiance of their Lochaber axes that the Cowgate Port was manned — and many were the occasions on which its defence presented a formidable mimicry of warfare. "The gateway," Sir Walter adds, "is now demolished, and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress! To recollect that I, however naturally disqualified, was one of these juvenile dreadnoughts, is a sad reflection for one who cannot now step over a brook without assistance."

I am unwilling to swell this narrative by extracts from Scott's published works, but there is one juvenile exploit told in the General Preface to the Waverley Novels, which I must crave leave to introduce here in his own language, because it is essentially necessary to complete our notion of his schoolboy life and character. "It is well known," he says, "that there is little boxing at the Scottish schools. About forty or fifty years ago, however, a far more dangerous mode of fighting, in parties or factions, was permitted in the streets of Edinburgh, to the great disgrace of the police, and danger of the parties concerned. These parties were generally formed from the quarters of the town in which the combatants resided, those of a particular square or district fighting against those of an adjoining one. Hence it happened that the children of the higher classes were often pitted against those of the lower, each taking their side according to the residence of their friends. So far as I recollect, however, it was unmingled either with feelings of democracy or aristocracy, or indeed with malice or ill-will of any kind towards the opposite party. In fact, it was only a rough mode of play. Such contests were, however, maintained with great vigor with stones, and sticks, and fisticuffs, when one party dared to charge, and the other stood their ground. Of course, mischief sometimes happened; boys are said to have been killed at these *bickers*, as they were called, and serious accidents certainly took place, as many contemporaries can bear witness.

"The author's father residing in George's Square, in the southern side of Edinburgh, the boys belonging to that family, with others in the square, were arranged into a sort of company, to which a lady of distinction presented a handsome set of colors.[1] Now, this company or regiment, as a matter of course, was engaged in weekly warfare with the boys inhabiting the Cross-causeway, Bristo-Street, the Potterrow — in short, the neighboring suburbs. These last were chiefly of the lower rank, but hardy loons, who threw stones to a hair's-breadth, and were very rugged antagonists at close quarters. The skirmish sometimes lasted for a whole evening, until one party or the other was victorious, when, if ours were successful, we drove the enemy to their quarters, and were usually chased back by the reinforcement of bigger lads who came to their assistance. If, on the contrary, we were pursued, as was often the case, into the precincts of our square, we were in our turn supported by our elder brothers, domestic servants, and similar auxiliaries. It followed, from our frequent opposition to each other, that, though not knowing the names of our enemies, we were yet well acquainted with their appearance, and had nicknames for the most remarkable of them. One very active and spirited boy might be considered as the principal leader in the cohort of the suburbs. He was, I suppose, thirteen or fourteen years old, finely made, tall, blue-eyed, with long fair hair, the very picture of a youthful Goth. This lad was always first in the charge, and last in the retreat — the Achilles at once and Ajax of the Cross-causeway. He was too formidable to us not to have a cognomen, and, like that of a knight of old, it was taken from the most remarkable part of his dress, being a pair of old green livery breeches, which was the principal part of his clothing; for, like Pentapolin, according to Don Quixote's account, Green-breeks, as we called him, always entered the battle with bare arms, legs, and feet.

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[1] This young patroness was the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland.

"It fell, that once upon a time when the combat was at its thickest, this plebeian champion headed a charge so rapid and furious, that all fled before him. He was several paces before his comrades, and had actually laid his hands upon the patrician standard, when one of our party, whom some misjudging friend had entrusted with a *couteau de chasse*, or hanger, inspired with a zeal for the honor of the corps, worthy of Major Sturgeon himself, struck poor Green-breeks over the head, with strength sufficient to cut him down. When this was seen, the casualty was so far beyond what had ever taken place before, that both parties fled different ways, leaving poor Green-breeks, with his bright hair plentifully dabbled in blood, to the care of the watchman, who (honest man) took care not to know who had done the mischief. The bloody hanger was thrown into one of the Meadow ditches, and solemn secrecy was sworn on all hands; but the remorse and terror of the actor were beyond all bounds, and his apprehensions of the most dreadful character. The wounded hero was for a few days in the

Infirmary, the case being only a trifling one. But though inquiry was strongly pressed on him, no argument could make him indicate the person from whom he had received the wound, though he must have been perfectly well known to him. When he recovered and was dismissed, the author and his brothers opened a communication with him, through the medium of a popular gingerbread baker, of whom both parties were customers, in order to tender a subsidy in the name of smart-money. The sum would excite ridicule were I to name it; but sure I am that the pockets of the noted Green-breeks never held as much money of his own. He declined the remittance, saying that he would not sell his blood; but at the same time reprobated the idea of being an informer, which he said was *clam*, that is, base or mean. With much urgency, he accepted a pound of snuff for the use of some old woman — aunt, grandmother, or the like — with whom he lived. We did not become friends, for the *bickers* were more agreeable to both parties than any more pacific amusement; but we conducted them ever after under mutual assurances of the highest consideration for each other." Sir Walter adds — "Of five brothers, all healthy and promising in a degree far beyond one whose infancy was visited by personal infirmity, and whose health after this period seemed long very precarious, I am, nevertheless, the only survivor. The best loved, and the best deserving to be loved, who had destined this incident to be the foundation of a literary composition, died 'before his day,' in a distant and foreign land; and trifles assume an importance not their own when connected with those who have been loved and lost."

During some part of his attendance on the High School, young Walter spent one hour daily at a small separate seminary of writing and arithmetic, kept by one Morton, where, as was, and I suppose continues to be, the custom of Edinburgh, young girls came for instruction as well as boys; and one of Mr. Morton's female pupils has been kind enough to set down some little reminiscences of Scott, who happened to sit at the same desk with herself. They appear to me the more interesting, because the lady had no acquaintance with him in the course of his subsequent life. Her nephew, Mr. James (the accomplished author of Richelieu), to whose friendship I owe her communication, assures me, too, that he had constantly heard her tell the same things in the very same way, as far back as his own memory reaches, many years before he had ever seen Sir Walter, or his aunt could have dreamt of surviving to assist in the biography of his early days.

"He attracted," Mrs. Churnside says, "the regard and fondness of all his companions, for he was ever rational, fanciful, lively, and possessed of that urbane gentleness of manner which makes its way to the heart. His imagination was constantly at work, and he often so engrossed the attention of those who learnt with him, that little could be done — Mr. Morton himself being forced to laugh as much as the little scholars at the odd turns and devices he fell upon; for he did nothing in the ordinary way, but, for example, even when he wanted ink to his pen, would get up some ludicrous story about sending his doggie to the mill again. He used also to interest us in a more serious way, by telling us the *visions*, as he called them, which he had lying alone on the floor or sofa, when kept from going to church on a Sunday by ill health. Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen — his misty and sublime sketches of the regions above, which he had visited in his trance. Recollecting these descriptions, radiant and not gloomy as they were, I have often thought since that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition — the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humor, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital. . . . I may add, that in walking he used always to keep his eyes turned downwards as if thinking, but with a pleasing expression of countenance, as if enjoying his thoughts. Having once known him, it was impossible ever to forget him. In this manner, after all the changes of a long life, he constantly appears as fresh as yesterday to my mind's eye."

This beautiful extract needs no commentary. I may as well, however, bear witness, that exactly as the schoolboy still walks before her "mind's eye," his image rises familiarly to mine, who never saw him until he was past the middle of life: that I trace in every feature of her delineation the same gentleness of aspect and demeanor which the presence of the female sex, whether in silk or in russet, ever commanded in the man; and that her description of the change on his countenance when passing from the "doggie of the mill" to the dream of Paradise is a perfect picture of what no one that has heard him recite a fragment of high poetry, in the course of table talk, can ever forget. Strangers may catch some notion of what fondly dwells on the memory of every friend, by glancing from the conversational bust of Chantrey to the first portrait by Raeburn, which represents the Last Minstrel as musing in his prime within sight of Hermitage.

I believe it was about this time that, as he expresses it in one of his latest works, "the first images of horror from the scenes of real life were stamped upon his mind," by the tragical death of his great-aunt, Mrs. Margaret Swinton. This old lady, whose extraordinary nerve of character he illustrates largely in the introduction to the story of Aunt Margaret's Mirror, was now living with one female attendant, in a small house not far from Mr. Scott's residence in George's Square. The maid-servant, in a sudden access of insanity, struck her mistress to death with a coal-axe, and then rushed furiously into the street with the bloody weapon in her hand, proclaiming aloud the horror she had perpetrated. I need not dwell on the effects which must have been produced in a virtuous and affectionate circle by this shocking incident. The old lady had been tenderly attached to her nephew. "She was," he says, "our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed round her to listen to her tales."

It was at this same period that Mr. and Mrs. Scott received into their house, as tutor for their children, Mr. James Mitchell, of whom the Ashestiel Memoir gives us a description, such as I could not have presented had he been still alive. Mr. Mitchell was living, however, at the time of his pupil's death, and I am now not only at liberty to present Scott's unmutilated account of their intercourse, but enabled to give also the most simple and characteristic narrative of the other party. I am sure no one, however nearly related to Mr. Mitchell, will now complain of seeing his keen-sighted pupil's sketch placed by the side, as it were, of the fuller portraiture drawn by the unconscious hand of the amiable and worthy man himself. The following is an extract from Mr. Mitchell's MS., entitled "Memorials of the most remarkable occurrences and transactions of my life, drawn up in the hope that, when I shall be no more, they may be read with profit and pleasure by my children." The good man was so kind as to copy out one chapter for my use, as soon as he heard of Sir Walter Scott's death. He was then, and had for many years been, minister of a Presbyterian chapel at Wooler, in Northumberland, to which situation he had retired on losing his benefice at Montrose, in consequence of the Sabbatarian scruples alluded to in Scott's Autobiography.

"In 1782," says Mr. Mitchell, "I became a tutor in Mr. Walter Scott's family. He was a Writer to the Signet in

George's Square, Edinburgh. Mr. Scott was a fine-looking man, then a little past the meridian of life, of dignified, yet agreeable manners. His business was extensive. He was a man of tried integrity, of strict morals, and had a respect for religion and its ordinances. The church the family attended was the Old Greyfriars, of which the celebrated Doctors Robertson and Erskine were the ministers. Thither went Mr. and Mrs. Scott every Sabbath, when well and at home, attended by their fine young family of children, and their domestic servants — a sight so amiable and exemplary as often to excite in my breast a glow of heartfelt satisfaction. According to an established and laudable practice in the family, the heads of it, the children, and servants, were assembled on Sunday evenings in the drawing-room, and examined on the Church Catechism and sermons they had heard delivered during the course of the day; on which occasions I had to perform the part of chaplain, and conclude with prayer. From Mrs. Scott I learned that Mr. Scott was one that had not been seduced from the paths of virtue; but had been enabled to venerate good morals from his youth. When he first came to Edinburgh to follow out his profession, some of his schoolfellows, who, like him, had come to reside in Edinburgh, attempted to unhinge his principles, and corrupt his morals; but when they found him resolute, and unshaken in his virtuous dispositions, they gave up the attempt; but, instead of abandoning him altogether, they thought the more of him, and honored him with their confidence and patronage; which is certainly a great inducement to young men in the outset of life to act a similar part.

“After having heard of his inflexible adherence to the cause of virtue in his youth, and his regular attendance on the ordinances of religion in after-life, we will not be surprised to be told that he bore a sacred regard for the Sabbath, nor at the following anecdote illustrative of it. An opulent farmer of East Lothian had employed Mr. Scott as his agent, in a cause depending before the Court of Session. Having a curiosity to see something in the papers relative to the process, which were deposited in Mr. Scott's hands, this worldly man came into Edinburgh on a Sunday to have an inspection of them. As there was no immediate necessity for this measure, Mr. Scott asked the farmer if an ordinary week-day would not answer equally well. The farmer was not willing to take this advice, but insisted on the production of his papers. Mr. Scott then delivered them to him, saying, it was not his practice to engage in secular business on the Sabbath, and that he would have no difficulty in Edinburgh to find some of his profession who would have none of his scruples. No wonder such a man was confided in, and greatly honored in his professional line. — All the poor services I did to his family were more than repaid by the comfort and honor I had by being in the family, the pecuniary remuneration I received, and particularly by his recommendation of me, some time afterwards, to the Magistrates and Town Council of Montrose, when there was a vacancy, and this brought me on the carpet, which, as he said, was all he could do, as the settlement would ultimately hinge on a popular election.

"Mrs. Scott was a wife in every respect worthy of such a husband. Like her partner, she was then a little past the meridian of life, of a prepossessing appearance, amiable manners, of a cultivated understanding, affectionate disposition, and fine taste. She was both able and disposed to soothe her husband's mind under the asperities of business, and to be a rich blessing to her numerous progeny. But what constituted her distinguishing ornament was that she was sincerely religious. Some years previous to my entrance into the family, I understood from one of the servants she had been under deep religious concern about her soul's salvation, which had ultimately issued in a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and in the enjoyment of its divine consolations. She liked Dr. Erskine's sermons; but was not fond of the Principal's, however rational, eloquent, and well composed, and would, if other things had answered, have gone, when he preached, to have heard Dr. Davidson. Mrs. Scott was a descendant of Dr. Daniel Rutherford, a professor in the Medical School of Edinburgh, and one of those eminent men, who, by learning and professional skill, brought it to the high pitch of celebrity to which it has attained. He was an excellent linguist, and, according to the custom of the times, delivered his prelections to the students in Latin. Mrs. Scott told me, that, when prescribing to his patients, it was his custom to offer up at the same time a prayer for the accompanying blessing of heaven; a laudable practice, in which, I fear, he has not been generally imitated by those of his profession.

"Mr. Scott's family consisted of six children, all of which were at home except the eldest, who was an officer in the army; and as they were of an age fit for instruction, they were all committed to my superintendence, which, in dependence on God, I exercised with an earnest and faithful regard to their temporal and spiritual good. As the most of them were under public teachers, the duty assigned me was mainly to assist them in the prosecution of their studies. In all the excellencies, whether as to temper, conduct, talents natural or acquired, which any of the children individually possessed, to Master Walter, since the celebrated Sir Walter, must a decided preference be ascribed. Though, like the rest of the children, placed under my tuition, the conducting of his education comparatively cost me but little trouble, being, by the quickness of his intellect, tenacity of memory, and diligent application to his studies, generally equal of himself to the acquisition of those tasks I or others prescribed to him. So that Master Walter might be regarded not so much as a pupil of mine, but as a friend and companion, and, I may add, as an assistant also; for, by his example and admonitions, he greatly strengthened my hands, and stimulated my other pupils to industry and good behavior. I seldom had occasion all the time I was in the family to find fault with him even for trifles, and only once to threaten serious castigation, of which he was no sooner aware than he suddenly sprung up, threw his arms about my neck, and kissed me. It is hardly needful to state, that now the intended castigation was no longer thought of. By such generous and noble conduct, my displeasure was in a moment converted into esteem and admiration; my soul melted into tenderness, and I was ready to mingle my tears with his. Some incidents in reference to him in that early period, and some interesting and useful conversations I had with him, then deeply impressed on my mind, and which the lapse of near half a century has not yet obliterated, afforded no doubtful presage of his future greatness and celebrity. On my going into the family, as far as I can judge, he might be in his twelfth or thirteenth year, a boy in the rector's class. However elevated above the other boys in genius, though generally in the list of the duxes, he was seldom, as far as I recollect, the leader of the school: nor need this be deemed surprising, as it has often been observed that boys of original genius have been outstripped, by those that were far inferior to themselves, in the acquisition of the dead languages. Dr. Adam, the rector, celebrated for his knowledge of the Latin language, was deservedly held by Mr. Walter in high admiration and regard; of which the following anecdote may be adduced as a proof. In the High School, as is well known, there are four masters and a rector. The classes of those masters the rector in rotation inspects, and in the mean time the master, whose school is examined, goes in to take care of the rector's. One of the masters, on account of some grudge, had rudely assaulted and injured the venerable rector one night in the High School Wynd. The rector's scholars, exasperated at the outrage, at the instigation of Master Walter, determined on revenge, and which was to be executed when this obnoxious master should again come to teach the class. When this occurred, the task the class had prescribed to them was that passage in the Æneid of Virgil, where the Queen of Carthage interrogates the court as to the stranger that had come to her habitation —

> 'Quis novus hic hospes successit sedibus nostris?'[1]

Master Walter, having taken a piece of paper, inscribed upon it these words, substituting *vanus* for *novus*, and pinned it to the tail of the master's coat, and turned him into ridicule by raising the laugh of the whole school against him. Though this juvenile action could not be justified on the footing of Christian principles, yet certainly it was so far honorable that it was not a dictate of personal revenge, but that it originated in respect for a worthy and injured man, and detestation of one whom he looked upon as a bad character.

"One forenoon, on coming from the High School, he said he wished to know my opinion as to his conduct in a matter he should state to me. When passing through the High School Yards, he found a half-guinea piece on the ground. Instead of appropriating this to his own use, a sense of honesty led him to look around, and on doing so he espied a countryman, whom he suspected to be the proprietor. Having asked the man if he had lost anything, he searched his pockets, and then replied that he had lost half-a-guinea. Master Walter with pleasure presented him with his lost treasure. In this transaction, his ingenuity in finding out the proper owner, and his integrity in restoring the property, met my most cordial approbation.

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[1] This transposition of *hospes* and *nostris* sufficiently confirms his pupil's statement that Mr. Mitchell "superintended his classical themes, but not classically." The "obnoxious master" alluded to was Burns's friend Nicoll, the hero of the song —

"Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam' to see," etc.

"When in church, Master Walter had more of a soporific tendency than the rest of my young charge. This seemed to be constitutional. He needed one or other of the family to arouse him, and from this it might be inferred that he would cut a poor figure on the Sabbath evening when examined about the sermons. But what excited the admiration of the family was, that none of the children, however wakeful, could answer as he did. The only way that I could account for this was, that when he heard the text, and divisions of the subject, his good sense, memory, and genius, supplied the thoughts which would occur to the preacher.

"On one occasion, in the dining-room, when, according to custom, he was reading some author in the time of relaxation from study, I asked him how he accounted for the superiority of knowledge he possessed above the rest of the family. His reply was: — Some years ago he had been attacked by a swelling in one of his ankles, which confined him to the house, and prevented him taking amusement and exercise, and which was the cause of his lameness. As under this ailment he could not romp with his brothers and the other young people in the green in George's Square, he found himself compelled to have recourse to some substitute for the juvenile amusements of his comrades, and this was reading. So that, to what he no doubt accounted a painful dispensation of Providence, he probably stood indebted for his future celebrity. When it was understood I was to leave the family, Master Walter told me that he had a small present to give me, to be kept as a memorandum of his friendship, and that it was of little value: 'But you know, Mr. Mitchell,' said he, 'that presents are not to be estimated according to their intrinsic value, but according to the intention of the donor.' This was his Adam's Grammar, which had seen hard service in its day, and had many animals and inscriptions on its margins. This, to my regret, is no longer to be found in my collection of books, nor do I know what has become of it.

"Since leaving the family, although no stranger to the widely spreading fame of Sir Walter, I have had few opportunities of personal intercourse with him. When minister in the second charge of the Established Church at Montrose, he paid me a visit, and spent a night with me — few visits have been more gratifying. He was then on his return from Aberdeen, where he, as an advocate, had attended the Court of Justiciary in its northern circuit. Nor was his attendance in this court his sole object: another, and perhaps the principal, was, as he stated to me, to collect in his excursion ancient ballads and traditional stories about fairies, witches, and ghosts. Such intelligence proved to me as an electrical shock; and as I then sincerely regretted, so do I still, that Sir Walter's precious time was so much devoted to the *dulce*, rather than the *utile* of composition, and that his great talent should have been wasted on such subjects. At the same time I feel happy to qualify this censure, as I am generally given to understand that his Novels are of a more pure and unexceptionable nature than characterizes writings of a similar description; while at the same time his pen has been occupied in the production of works of a better and nobler order. Impressed with the conviction that he would one day arrive at honor and influence in his native country, I endeavored to improve the occasion of his visit to secure his patronage in behalf of the strict and evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, in exerting himself to induce patrons to grant to the Christian people liberty to elect their own pastors in cases of vacancy. His answer struck me much: it was — 'Nay, nay, Mr. Mitchell, I 'll not do that; for if that were to be done, I and the like of me would have no life with such as you;' from which I inferred he thought that, were the evangelical clergy to obtain the superiority, they would introduce such strictness of discipline as would not quadrate with the ideas of that party called *the moderate* in the Church of Scotland, whose views, I presume, Sir Walter had now adopted. Some, however, to whom I have mentioned Sir Walter's reply, have suggested that I had misunderstood his meaning, and that what he said was not in earnest, but in jocularity and good-humor. This may be true, and certainly is a candid interpretation. As to the ideal beings already mentioned as the subject of his inquiries, my materials were too scanty to afford him much information."

Notwithstanding the rigidly Presbyterian habits which this chronicle describes with so much more satisfaction than the corresponding page in the Ashestiel Memoir, I am reminded, by a communication already quoted from a lady of the Ravelston family, that Mrs. Scott, who had, she says, "a turn for literature quite uncommon among the ladies of the time," encouraged her son in his passion for Shakespeare; that his plays, and the Arabian Nights, were often read aloud in the family circle by Walter, "and served to spend many a happy evening hour;" nay, that, however good Mitchell may have frowned at such a suggestion, even Mr. Scott made little objection to his children, and some of their young friends, getting up private theatricals occasionally in the dining-room after the lessons of the day were over. The lady adds, that Walter was always the manager, and had the whole charge of the affair, and that the favorite piece used to be Jane Shore, in which he was the Hastings, his sister the Alicia. I have heard from another friend of the family that Richard III. also was attempted, and that Walter took the part of the Duke of Gloucester, observing that "the limp would do well enough to represent the hump."

A story which I have seen in print, about his partaking in the dancing lessons of his brothers, I do not believe. But it was during Mr. Mitchell's residence in the family that they all made their unsuccessful attempts in the art of music, under the auspices of poor *Allister* Campbell — the Editor of Albyn's Anthology.

Mr. Mitchell appears to have terminated his superintendence before Walter left Dr. Adam, and in the interval between this and his entrance at College, he spent some time with his aunt, who now inhabited a cottage at Kelso; but the Memoir, I suspect, gives too much extension to that residence — which may be accounted for by his blending with it a similar visit which he paid to the same place during his College vacation of the next year.

Some of the features of Miss Jenny's abode at Kelso are alluded to in the Memoir, but the fullest description of it occurs in his Essay on Landscape Gardening (1828), where, talking of grounds laid out in the *Dutch taste*, he says: — "Their rarity *now* entitles them to some care as a species of antiques, and unquestionably they give character to some snug, quiet, and sequestered situations, which would otherwise have no marked feature of any kind. I retain an early and pleasing recollection of the seclusion of such a scene. A small cottage, adjacent to a beautiful village, the habitation of an ancient maiden lady, was for some time my abode. It was situated in a garden of seven or eight acres, planted about the beginning of the eighteenth century by one of the Millars, related to the author of the Gardeners' Dictionary, or, for aught I know, by himself. It was full of long, straight walks, between hedges of yew and hornbeam, which rose tall and close on every side. There were thickets of flowery shrubs, a bower, and an arbor, to which access was obtained through a little maze of contorted walks calling itself a labyrinth. In the centre of the bower was a splendid Platanus, or Oriental plane — a huge hill of leaves — one of the noblest specimens of that regularly beautiful tree which I remember to have seen. In different parts of the garden were fine ornamental trees, which had attained great size, and the orchard was filled with fruit-trees of the best description. There were seats, and hilly walks, and a banqueting house. I visited this scene lately, after an absence of many years. Its air of retreat, the seclusion which its alleys afforded, was entirely gone; the huge Platanus had died, like most of its kind, in the beginning of this century; the hedges were cut down, the trees stubbed up, and the whole character of the place so destroyed that I was glad when I could leave it." It was under this Platanus that Scott first devoured Percy's Reliques. I remember well being with him, in 1820 or 1821, when he revisited the favorite scene, and the sadness of his looks when he discovered that the "huge hill of leaves" was no more.

To keep up his scholarship while inhabiting *the garden*, he attended daily, as he informs us, the public school of Kelso, and here he made his first acquaintance with a family, two members of which were intimately connected with the most important literary transactions of his after-life — James Ballantyne, the printer of almost all his works, and his brother John, who had a share in the publication of many of them. Their father was a respectable tradesman in this pretty town. The elder of the brothers, who did not long survive his illustrious friend, was kind enough to make an exertion on behalf of this work, while stretched on the bed from which he never rose, and dictated a valuable paper of *memoranda*, from which I shall here introduce my first extract: —

"I think," says James Ballantyne, "it was in the year 1783 that I first became acquainted with Sir Walter Scott, then a boy about my own age, at the Grammar School of Kelso, of which Mr. Lancelot Whale was the Rector. The impression left by his manners was, even at that early period, calculated to be deep, and I cannot recall any other instance in which the man and the boy continued to resemble each other so much and so long. Walter Scott was not a constant schoolfellow at this seminary; he only attended it for a few weeks during the vacation of the Edinburgh High School. He was then, as he continued during all his after-life to be, devoted to antiquarian lore, and was certainly the best story-teller I had ever heard, either then or since. He soon discovered that I was as fond of listening as he himself was of relating; and I remember it was a thing of daily occurrence, that after he had made himself master of his own lesson, I, alas, being still sadly to seek in mine, he used to whisper to me, 'Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story.' I well recollect that he had a form, or seat, appropriated to himself, the particular reason of which I cannot tell, but he was always treated with a peculiar degree of respect, not by the boys of the different classes merely, but by the venerable Master Lancelot himself, who, an absent, grotesque being, betwixt six and seven feet high, was nevertheless an admirable scholar, and sure to be delighted to find any one so well qualified to sympathize with him as young Walter Scott; and the affectionate gratitude of the young pupil was never intermitted, so long as his venerable master continued to live. I may mention, in passing, that old Whale bore, in many particulars, a strong resemblance to Dominie Sampson, though, it must be admitted, combining more gentlemanly manners with equal classical lore, and, on the whole, being a much superior sort of person. In the intervals of school hours, it was our constant practice to walk together by the banks of the Tweed, our employment continuing exactly the same, for his stories seemed to be quite inexhaustible. This intercourse continued during the summers of the years 1783–84, but was broken off in 1785–86, when I went into Edinburgh to College."

Perhaps the separate seat assigned to Walter Scott by the Kelso schoolmaster was considered due to him as a temporary visitor from the great Edinburgh seminary. Very possibly, however, the worthy Mr. Whale thought of nothing but protecting his solitary student of Persius and Tacitus from the chances of being jostled among the adherents of Ruddiman and Cornelius Nepos.

Another of his Kelso schoolfellows was Robert Waldie (son of Mr. Waldie of Henderside), and to this connection he owed, both while quartered in the garden, and afterwards at Rosebank, many kind attentions, of which he ever preserved a grateful recollection, and which have left strong traces on every page of his works in which he has occasion to introduce the Society of Friends. This young companion's mother, though always called in the neighborhood "Lady Waldie," belonged to that community; and the style of life and manners depicted in the household of Joshua Geddes of Mount Sharon and his amiable sister, in some of the sweetest chapters of Redgauntlet, is a slightly decorated edition of what he witnessed under her hospitable roof. He records, in a note to the novel, the "liberality and benevolence" of this "kind old lady" in allowing him to "rummage at pleasure, and carry home any volumes he chose of her small but valuable library;" annexing only the condition that he should "take at the same time some of the tracts printed for encouraging and extending the doctrines of her own sect. She did not," he adds, "even exact any assurance that I would read these performances, being too justly afraid of involving me in a breach of promise, but was merely desirous that I should have the chance of instruction within my reach, in case whim, curiosity, or accident, might induce me to have recourse to it." I remember the pleasure with which he read, late in life, Rome in the Nineteenth Century, an ingenious work produced by one of Mrs. Waldie's granddaughters, and how comically he pictured the alarm with which his ancient friend would have perused some of its delineations of the high places of Popery.

I shall be pardoned for adding a marginal note written, apparently late in Scott's life, on his copy of a little forgotten volume, entitled Trifles in Verse, by a Young Soldier. "In 1783," he says, "or about that time, I remember John Marjoribanks, a smart recruiting officer in the village of Kelso, the Weekly Chronicle of which he filled with his love verses. His Delia was a Miss Dickson, daughter of a shopkeeper in the same village — his Gloriana a certain prudish old maiden lady, benempt Miss Goldie; I think I see her still, with her thin arms sheathed in scarlet gloves, and crossed like two lobsters in a fishmonger's stand. Poor Delia was a very beautiful girl, and not more conceited than a be-rhymed miss ought to be. Many years afterwards I found the Kelso *belle*, thin and pale, her good looks gone, and her smart dress neglected, governess to the brats of a Paisley manufacturer. I ought to say there was not an atom of scandal in her flirtation with the young military poet. The bard's fate was not much better; after some service in India and elsewhere, he led a half-pay life about Edinburgh, and died there. There is a tenuity of thought in what he has written, but his verses are usually easy, and I like them because they recall my schoolboy days, when I thought him a Horace, and his Delia a goddess."

CHAPTER IV

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTINUED. — ANECDOTES OF SCOTT'S COLLEGE LIFE

1783–1786

On returning to Edinburgh, and entering the College, in November, 1783, Scott found himself once more in the fellowship of all his intimates of the High School; of whom, besides those mentioned in the autobiographical fragment, he speaks in his diaries with particular affection of Sir William Rae, Bart., David Monypenny (afterwards Lord Pitmilly), Thomas Tod, W. S., Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, Bart., all familiar friends of his through manhood, — and the Earl of Dalhousie,[1] whom, on meeting with him after a long separation in the evening of life, he records as still being, and having always been, "the same manly and generous character that all about him loved as the *Lordie Ramsay* of the Yards." The chosen companion, however, continued to be for some time Mr. John Irving — his suburban walks with whom have been recollected so tenderly, both in the Memoir of 1808, and in the Preface to Waverley of 1829. It will interest the reader to compare with those beautiful descriptions the following extract from a letter with which Mr. Irving has favored me: —

"Every Saturday, and more frequently during the vacations, we used to retire, with three or four books from the circulating library, to Salisbury Crags, Arthur's Seat, or Blackford Hill, and read them together. He read faster than I, and had, on this account, to wait a little at finishing every two pages, before turning the leaf. The books we most delighted in were romances of knight-errantry; the Castle of Otranto, Spenser, Ariosto, and Boiardo were great favorites. We used to climb up the rocks in search of places where we might sit sheltered from the wind; and the more inaccessible they were, the better we liked them. He was very expert at climbing. Sometimes we got into places where we found it difficult to move either up or down, and I recollect it being proposed, on several occasions, that I should go for a ladder to see and extricate him; but I never had any need really to do so, for he always managed somehow either to get down or ascend to the top. The number of books we thus devoured was very great. I forgot great part of what I read; but my friend, notwithstanding he read with such rapidity, remained, to my surprise, master of it all, and could even weeks or months afterwards repeat a whole page in which anything had particularly struck him at the moment. After we had continued this practice of reading for two years or more together, he proposed that we should recite to each other alternately such adventures of knight-errants as we could ourselves contrive; and we continued to do so a long while. He found no difficulty in it, and used to recite for half an hour or more at a time, while I seldom continued half that space. The stories we told were, as Sir Walter has said, interminable — for we were unwilling to have any of our favorite knights killed. Our passion for romance led us to learn Italian together; after a time we could both read it with fluency, and we then copied such tales as we had met with in that language, being a continued succession of battles and enchantments. He began early to collect old ballads, and as my mother could repeat a great many, he used to come and learn those she could recite to him. He used to get all the copies of these ballads he could, and select the best."

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[1] George, ninth Earl of Dalhousie, highly distinguished in the military annals of his time, died on the 21st March, 1838, in his 68th year.

These, no doubt, were among the germs of the collection of ballads in six little volumes, which, from the handwriting, had been begun at this early period, and which is still preserved at Abbotsford. And it appears that at least as early a date must be ascribed to another collection of little humorous stories in prose, the *Penny Chap-books*, as they are called, still in high favor among the lower classes in Scotland, which stands on the same shelf. In a letter of 1830[1] he states that he had bound up things of this kind to the extent of several volumes, before he was ten years old.

Although the Ashestiel Memoir mentions so very lightly his boyish addiction to verse, and the rebuke which his vein received from the apothecary's blue-buskined wife as having been followed by similar treatment on the part of others, I am inclined to believe that while thus devouring, along with his young friend, the stories of Italian romance, he essayed, from time to time, to weave some of their materials into rhyme; — nay, that he must have made at least one rather serious effort of this kind, as early as the date of these rambles to the Salisbury Crags. I have found among his mother's papers a copy of verses, headed, "*Lines to Mr. Walter Scott — on reading his poem of Guiscard and Matilda, inscribed to Miss Keith of Ravelston.*" There is no date; but I conceive the lines bear internal evidence of having been written when he was very young — not, I should suppose, above fourteen or fifteen at most. I think it also certain that the writer was a woman; and have almost as little doubt that they came from the pen of his old admirer, Mrs. Cockburn. They are as follows: —

"If such the accents of thy early youth
When playful fancy holds the place of truth;
If so divinely sweet thy numbers flow,
And thy young heart melts with such tender woe;

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[1] See Strang's *Germany in 1831*, vol. i. p. 265.

What praise, what admiration shall be thine,
When sense mature with science shall combine
To raise thy genius, and thy taste refine!

"Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you;
Go, bid the seeds her hand hath sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies;
Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.
Than other poets happier mayst thou prove,
More blest in friendship, fortunate in love,
Whilst Fame, who longs to make true merit known,
Impatient waits, to claim thee as her own.

"Scorning the yoke of prejudice and pride,
Thy tender mind let truth and reason guide;
Let meek humility thy steps attend,
And firm integrity, youth's surest friend.
So peace and honor all thy hours shall bless,
And conscious rectitude each joy increase;
A nobler meed be thine than empty praise —
Heaven shall approve thy life, and Keith thy lays." [1]

At the period to which I refer these verses, Scott's parents still continued to have some expectations of curing his lameness, and Mr. Irving remembers to have often assisted in applying the electrical apparatus, on which for a considerable time they principally rested their hopes. There is an allusion to these experiments in Scott's autobiographical fragment, but I have found a fuller notice on the margin of his copy of the Guide to Health, Beauty, Riches, and Longevity, as Captain Grose chose to entitle an amusing collection of quack advertisements.

"The celebrated Dr. Graham," says the annotator, "was an empiric of some genius and great assurance. In fact, he had a dash of madness in his composition. He had a fine electrical apparatus, and used it with skill. I myself, amongst others, was subjected to a course of electricity under his charge. I remember seeing the old Earl of Hopetoun seated in a large armchair, and hung round with a collar, and a belt of magnets, like an Indian chief. After this, growing quite wild, Graham set up his *Temple of Health*, and lectured on *the Celestial Bed.* He attempted a course of these lectures at Edinburgh, and as the Magistrates refused to let him do so, he libelled them in a series of advertisements, the flights of which were infinitely more absurd and exalted than those which Grose has collected. In one tirade (long in my possession), he declared that 'he looked down upon them' (the Magistrates) 'as the sun in his meridian glory looks down on the poor, feeble, stinking glimmer of an expiring farthing candle, or as G— himself, in the plenitude of his omnipotence, may regard the insolent bouncings of a few refractory maggots in a rotten cheese.' Graham was a good-looking man; he used to come to the Greyfriars' Church in a suit of white and silver, with a chapeau-bras, and his hair marvellously dressed into a sort of double toupee, which divided upon his head like the two tops of Parnassus. Mrs. Macaulay, the historianess, married his brother. Lady Hamilton is said to have first enacted his Goddess of Health, being at this time a *fille de joie* of great celebrity.[1] The Temple of Health dwindled into a sort of obscene *hell*, or gambling house. In a quarrel which took place there, a poor young man was run into the bowels with a red-hot poker, of which injury he died. The mob vented their fury on the house, and the Magistrates, somewhat of the latest, shut up the exhibition. A quantity of glass and crystal trumpery, the remains of the splendid apparatus, was sold on the South Bridge for next to nothing. Graham's next receipt was *the earth-bath*, with which he wrought some cures; but that also failing, he was, I believe, literally starved to death."

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[1] [Miss Fleming, in her contribution to Dr. John Brown's memorial of her sister Marjorie, says that these verses were written by her aunt, Mrs. Keir, after meeting the boy poet at Ravelston. Another aunt was the wife of Scott's kinsman, Mr. William Keith of Corstorphine Hill, and it was at her house, 1, North Charlotte Street, that Sir Walter came to know familiarly her delightful little niece, during her long visits to Edinburgh. These ladies and Mrs. Fleming were the daughters of Dr. James Rae. — See *Marjorie Fleming.*]

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[1] Lord Nelson's connection with this lady will preserve her celebrity. In Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits* the reader will find more about Dr. Graham.

Graham's earth-bath, too, was, I understand, tried upon Scott, but his was not one of the cases, if any such there were, in which it worked a cure. He, however, improved about this time greatly in his general health and strength, and Mr. Irving, in accordance with the statement in the Memoir, assures me that while attending the early classes at the College the young friends extended their walks, so as to visit in succession all the old castles within eight or ten miles of Edinburgh. "Sir Walter," he says, "was specially fond of Rosslyn. We frequently walked thither before breakfast — after breakfasting there, walked all down the river side to Lasswade — and thence home to town before dinner. He used generally to rest one hand upon my shoulder when we walked together, and leaned with the other on a stout stick."

The love of picturesque scenery, and especially of feudal castles, with which the vicinity of Edinburgh is plentifully garnished, awoke, as the Memoir tells us, the desire of being able to use the pencil. Mr. Irving says — "I attended one summer a class of drawing along with him, but although both fond of it, we found it took up so much time that we gave this up before we had made much progress." In one of his later diaries, Scott himself gives the following more particular account of this matter: —

"I took lessons of oil-painting in youth from a little Jew animalcule — a smouch called Burrell — a clever, sensible creature though. But I could make no progress either in painting or drawing. Nature denied me the correctness of eye and neatness of hand. Yet I was very desirous to be a draughtsman at least — and labored harder to attain that point than at any other in my recollection to which I did not make some approaches. Burrell was not useless to me altogether neither. He was a Prussian, and I got from him many a long story of the battles of Frederick, in whose armies his father had been a commissary, or perhaps a spy. I remember his picturesque account of seeing a party of the *black hussars* bringing in some forage carts which they had taken from a body of the Cossacks, whom he described as lying on the top of the carts of hay mortally wounded, and, like the dying gladiator, eyeing their own blood as it ran down through the straw."

A year or two later Scott renewed his attempt. "I afterwards," he says, "took lessons from Walker, whom we used to call *Blue Beard*. He was one of the most conceited persons in the world, but a good teacher; one of the ugliest countenances he had that need be exhibited — enough, as we say, to *spean weans*. The man was always extremely precise in the quality of everything about him; his dress, accommodations, and everything else. He became insolvent, poor man, and, for some reason or other, I attended the meeting of those concerned in his affairs. Instead of ordinary accommodations for writing, each of the persons present was equipped with a large sheet of drawing-paper and a swan's quill. It was mournfully ridiculous enough. Skirving made an admirable likeness of Walker; not a single scar or mark of the small-pox, which seamed his countenance, but the too accurate brother of the brush had faithfully laid it down in longitude and latitude. Poor Walker destroyed it (being in crayons) rather than let the caricature of his ugliness appear at the sale of his effects. I did learn myself to take some vile views from nature. When Will Clerk and I lived very much together, I used sometimes to make them under his instruction. He to whom, as to all his family, art is a familiar attribute, wondered at me as a Newfoundland dog would at a greyhound which showed fear of the water."[1]

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[1] [See *Journal*, vol. i. pp. 137–139.]

Notwithstanding all that Scott says about the total failure of his attempts in the art of the pencil, I presume few will doubt that they proved very useful to him afterwards; from them it is natural to suppose he caught the habit of analyzing, with some approach at least to accuracy, the scenes over which his eye might have continued to wander with the vague sense of delight. I may add that a longer and more successful practice of the crayon might, I cannot but think, have proved the reverse of serviceable to him as a future painter with the pen. He might have contracted the habit of copying from pictures rather than from nature itself; and we should thus have lost that which constitutes the very highest charm in his delineations of scenery, namely, that the effect is produced by the selection of a few striking features, arranged with a light, unconscious grace, neither too much nor too little — equally remote from the barren generalizations of a former age, and the dull, servile fidelity with which so many inferior writers of our time fill in both background and foreground, having no more notion of the perspective of genius than Chinese paper-stainers have of that of the atmosphere, and producing in fact not descriptions but inventories.

The illness which he alludes to in his Memoir, as interrupting for a considerable period his attendance on the Latin and Greek classes in Edinburgh College, is spoken of more largely in one of his prefaces.[1] It arose from the bursting of a blood-vessel in the lower bowels; and I have heard him say that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, considered his recovery from it as little less than miraculous. His sweet temper and calm courage were no doubt important elements of safety. He submitted without a murmur to the severe discipline prescribed by his affectionate physician, and found consolation in poetry, romance, and the enthusiasm of young friendship. Day after day John Irving relieved his mother and sister in their attendance upon him. The bed on which he lay was piled with a constant succession of works of imagination, and sad realities were forgotten amidst the brilliant day-dreams of genius drinking unwearied from the eternal fountains of Spenser and Shakespeare. Chess was recommended as a relief to these unintermitted, though desultory studies; and he engaged eagerly in the game which had found favor with so many of his Paladins. Mr. Irving remembers playing it with him hour after hour, in very cold weather, when, the windows being kept open as a part of the medical treatment, nothing but youthful nerves and spirit could have persevered. But Scott did not pursue the science of chess after his boyhood. He used to say that it was a shame to throw away upon mastering a mere game, however ingenious, the time which would suffice for the acquisition of a new language. "Surely," he said, "chess-playing is a sad waste of brains."

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[1] See Preface to *Waverley*, 1829.

His recovery was completed by another visit to Roxburghshire. Captain Robert Scott, who had been so kind to the sickly infant at Bath, finally retired about this time from his profession, and purchased the elegant villa of Rosebank, on the Tweed, a little below Kelso. Here Walter now took up his quarters, and here, during all the rest of his youth, he found, whenever he chose, a second home, in many respects more agreeable than his own. His uncle, as letters to be subsequently quoted will show, had nothing of his father's coldness for polite letters, but entered into all his favorite pursuits with keen sympathy, and was consulted, from this time forth, upon all his juvenile essays, both in prose and verse.

He does not seem to have resumed attendance at College during the session of 1785–86; so that the Latin and Greek classes, with that of Logic, were the only ones he had passed through previous to the signing of his indentures as an apprentice to his father. The Memoir mentions the ethical course of Dugald Stewart, as if he had gone immediately from the logical professor (Mr. Bruce) to that eminent lecturer; but he, in fact, attended Mr. Stewart four years afterwards, when beginning to consider himself as finally destined for the Bar.

I shall only add to what he sets down on the subject of his early academical studies, that in this, as in almost every case, he appears to have underrated his own attainments. He had, indeed, no pretensions to the name of an extensive, far less of an accurate, Latin scholar; but he could read, I believe, any Latin author, of any age, so as to catch without difficulty his meaning; and although his favorite Latin poet, as well as historian, in later days, was Buchanan, he had preserved, or subsequently acquired, a strong relish for some others of more ancient date. I may mention, in particular, Lucan and Claudian. Of Greek, he does not exaggerate in saying that he had forgotten even the alphabet; for he was puzzled with the words ἀοιδος and ποιητης, which he had occasion to introduce, from some authority on his table, into his Introduction to Popular Poetry, written in April, 1830; and happening to be in the house with him at the time, he sent for me to insert them for him in his MS. Mr. Irving has informed us of the early period at which he enjoyed the real Tasso and Ariosto. I presume he had at least as soon as this enabled himself to read Gil Blas in the original; and, in all probability, we may refer to the same time of his life, or one not much later, his acquisition of as much Spanish as served for the Guerras Civiles de Granada, Lazarillo de Tormes, and, above all, Don Quixote. He read all these languages in after-life with about the same facility. I never but once heard him attempt to speak any of them, and that was when some of the courtiers of Charles X. came to Abbotsford, soon after that unfortunate prince took up his residence for the second time at Holyrood-house. Finding that one or two of these gentlemen could speak no English at all, he made some efforts to amuse them in their own language after the champagne had been passing briskly round the table; and I was amused next morning with the expression of one of the party, who, alluding to the sort of reading in which Sir Walter seemed to have chiefly occupied himself, said, "Mon Dieu! comme il estropiait, entre deux vins, le Français du bon sire de Joinville!" Of all these tongues, as of German somewhat later, he acquired as much as was needful for his own purposes, of which a critical study of any foreign language made at no time any part. In them he sought for incidents, and he found images; but for the treasures of diction he was content to dig on British soil. He had all he wanted in the old wells of "English undefiled," and the still living, though fast shrinking, waters of that sister idiom which had not always, as he flattered himself, deserved the name of a dialect.

As may be said, I believe, with perfect truth of every really great man, Scott was self-educated in every branch of knowledge which he ever turned to account in the works of his genius — and he has himself told us that his real studies were those lonely and desultory ones of which he has given a copy in the third chapter of Waverley, where the hero is represented as "driving through the sea of books, like a vessel without pilot or rudder;" that is to say, obeying nothing but the strong breath of native inclination: — "He had read, and stored in a memory of uncommon tenacity, much curious, though ill-arranged and miscellaneous information. In English literature, he was master of Shakespeare and Milton, of our earlier dramatic authors, of many picturesque and interesting passages from our old historical chronicles, and was particularly well acquainted with Spenser, Drayton, and other poets, who have exercised themselves on romantic fiction, — *of all themes the most fascinating to a youthful imagination, before the passions have roused themselves, and demand poetry of a more sentimental description.*" I need not repeat his enumeration of other favorites, Pulci, the Decameron, Froissart, Brantôme, Delanoue, and the chivalrous and romantic lore of Spain. I have quoted a passage so well known, only for the sake of the striking circumstance by which it marks the very early date of these multifarious studies.

CHAPTER V

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED. — SCOTT'S APPRENTICESHIP TO HIS FATHER. — EXCURSIONS TO THE HIGHLANDS, ETC. — DEBATING SOCIETIES. — EARLY CORRESPONDENCE, ETC. — WILLIAMINA STUART

1786–1790

In the Minute-books of the Society of Writers to the Signet appears the following entry: "Edinburgh, 15th May, 1786. Compeared Walter Scott, and presented an indenture, dated 31st March last, entered into between him and Walter Scott, his son, for five years from the date thereof, under a mutual penalty of £40 sterling."

An inauspicious step this might at first sight appear in the early history of one so strongly predisposed for pursuits wide as the antipodes asunder from the dry technicalities of conveyancing; but he himself, I believe, was never heard, in his mature age, to express any regret that it should have been taken; and I am convinced for my part that it was a fortunate one. It prevented him, indeed, from passing with the usual regularity through a long course of Scotch metaphysics; but I extremely doubt whether any discipline could ever have led him to derive either pleasure or profit from studies of that order. His apprenticeship left him time enough, as we shall find, for continuing his application to the stores of poetry and romance, and those old chroniclers, who to the end were his darling historians. Indeed, if he had wanted any new stimulus, the necessity of devoting certain hours of every day to a routine of drudgery, however it might have operated on a spirit more prone to earth, must have tended to quicken his appetite for "the sweet bread eaten in secret." But the duties which he had now to fulfil were, in various ways, directly and positively beneficial to the development both of his genius and his character. It was in the discharge of his functions as a Writer's Apprentice that he first penetrated into the Highlands, and formed those friendships among the surviving heroes of 1745, which laid the foundation for one great class of his works. Even the less attractive parts of his new vocation were calculated to give him a more complete insight into the smaller workings of poor human nature than can ever perhaps be gathered from the experience of the legal profession in its higher walk; — the etiquette of the bar in Scotland, as in England, being averse to personal intercourse between the advocate and his client. But finally, and I will say chiefly, it was to this prosaic discipline that he owed those habits of steady, sober diligence, which few imaginative authors had ever before exemplified — and which, unless thus beaten into his composition at a ductile stage, even he, in all probability, could never have carried into the almost professional exercise of some of the highest and most delicate faculties of the human mind. He speaks, in not the least remarkable passage of the preceding Memoir, as if constitutional indolence had been his portion in common with all the members of his father's family. When Gifford, in a dispute with Jacob Bryant, quoted Doctor Johnson's own confession that he knew little Greek, Bryant answered, "Yes, young man; but how shall we know what Johnson would have called much Greek?" and Gifford has recorded the deep impression which this hint left on his own mind. What Scott would have called constitutional diligence, I know not; but surely, if indolence of any kind had been inherent in his nature, even the triumph of Socrates was not more signal than his.

It will be, by some of my friends, considered as trivial to remark on such a circumstance — but the reader who is unacquainted with the professional habits of the Scotch lawyers may as well be told that the Writer's Apprentice receives a certain allowance in money for every page he transcribes; and that, as in those days the greater part of the business, even of the supreme courts, was carried on by means of written papers, a ready penman, in a well-employed chamber, could earn in this way enough, at all events, to make a handsome addition to the pocket-money which was likely to be thought suitable for a youth of fifteen by such a man as the elder Scott. The allowance being, I believe, threepence for every page containing a certain fixed number of words, when Walter had finished, as he tells us he occasionally did, 120 pages within twenty-four hours, his fee would amount to thirty shillings; and in his early letters I find him more than once congratulating himself on having been, by some such exertion, enabled to purchase a book, or a coin, otherwise beyond his reach. A schoolfellow, who was now, like himself, a Writer's Apprentice, recollects the eagerness with which he thus made himself master of Evans's Ballads, shortly after their publication; and another of them, already often referred to, remembers, in particular, his rapture with Mickle's Cumnor Hall, which first appeared in that collection. "After the labors of the day were over," says Mr. Irving, "we often walked in *the Meadows*" — (a large field intersected by formal alleys of old trees, adjoining George's Square) — "especially in the moonlight nights; and he seemed never weary of repeating the first stanza —

'The dews of summer night did fall —
  The Moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
  And many an oak that grew thereby.' "

I have thought it worth while to preserve these reminiscences of his companions at the time, though he has himself stated the circumstance in his Preface to Kenilworth. "There is a period in youth," he there says, "when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in after-life. At this season of immature taste, the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne. The first stanza of Cumnor Hall especially had a peculiar enchantment for his youthful ear — the force of which is not yet (1829) entirely spent." Thus that favorite elegy, after having dwelt on his memory and imagination for forty years, suggested the subject of one of his noblest romances.

It is affirmed by a preceding biographer, on the authority of one of these brother-apprentices, that about this period Scott showed him a MS. poem on the Conquest of Granada, in four books, each amounting to about 400 lines, which, soon after it was finished, he committed to the flames.[1] As he states in his Essay on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, that, for ten years previous to 1796, when his first translation from the German was executed, he had written no verses "except an occasional sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow," I presume this Conquest of Granada, the fruit of his study of the Guerras Civiles, must be assigned to the summer of 1786 — or, making allowance for trivial inaccuracy, to the next year at latest. It was probably composed in imitation of Mickle's Lusiad: — at all events, we have a very distinct statement, that he made no attempts in the manner of the old minstrels, early as his admiration for them had been, until the period of his acquaintance with Bürger. Thus with him, as with most others, genius had hazarded many a random effort ere it discovered the true keynote. Long had

> "Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
> And an uncertain warbling made,"

before "the measure wild" was caught, and

> "In varying cadence, soft or strong,
> He swept the sounding chords along."

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[1] *Life of Scott,* by Mr. Allan, p. 53.

His youthful admiration of Langhorne has been rendered memorable by his own record of his first and only interview with his great predecessor, Robert Burns. Although the letter in which he narrates this incident, addressed to myself in 1827, when I was writing a short biography of that poet, has been often reprinted, it is too important for my present purpose to be omitted here.

"As for Burns," he writes, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum.* I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–87, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath, —

'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears.'

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of The Justice of the Peace. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust: his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school — *i. e.*, none of your modern agriculturists, who keep laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Fergusson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate."

I need not remark on the extent of knowledge and justness of taste exemplified in this early measurement of Burns, both as a student of English literature and as a Scottish poet. The print, over which Scott saw Burns shed tears, is still in the possession of Dr. Ferguson's family, and I had often heard him tell the story, in the room where the precious relic hangs, before I requested him to set it down in writing — how little anticipating the use to which I should ultimately apply it![1]

His intimacy with Adam (now Sir Adam) Ferguson was thus his first means of introduction to the higher literary society of Edinburgh; and it was very probably to that connection that he owed, among the rest, his acquaintance with the blind poet Blacklock, whom Johnson, twelve years earlier, "beheld with reverence." We have seen, however, that the venerable author of Douglas was a friend of his own parents, and had noticed him even in his infancy at Bath. John Home now inhabited a villa at no great distance from Edinburgh, and there, all through his young days, Scott was a frequent guest. Nor must it be forgotten that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, inherited much of the general accomplishments, as well as the professional reputation of his father — and that it was beneath that roof he saw, several years before this, Dr. Cartwright, then in the enjoyment of some fame as a poet. In this family, indeed, he had more than one kind and strenuous encourager of his early literary tastes, as will be shown abundantly when we reach certain relics of his correspondence with his mother's sister. Dr. Rutherford's good-natured remonstrances with him, as a boy, for reading at breakfast, are well remembered, and will remind my reader of a similar trait in the juvenile manners both of Burns and Byron; nor was this habit entirely laid aside even in Scott's advanced age.

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[1] ["Long life to thy fame and peace to thy soul, Rob Burns! When I want to express a sentiment which I feel strongly, I find the phrase in Shakespeare — or thee." — *Journal*, December 11, 1826.]

If he is quite accurate in referring his first acquaintance with the Highlands to his fifteenth year, this incident also belongs to the first season of his apprenticeship. His father had, among a rather numerous list of Highland clients, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, an enthusiastic Jacobite, who had survived to recount, in secure and vigorous old age, his active experiences in the insurrections both of 1715 and 1745. He had, it appears, attracted Walter's attention and admiration at a very early date; for he speaks of having "seen him in arms" and heard him "exult in the prospect of drawing his claymore once more before he died," when Paul Jones threatened a descent on Edinburgh; which transaction occurred in September, 1779. Invernahyle, as Scott adds, was the only person who seemed to have retained possession of his cool senses at the period of that disgraceful alarm, and offered the magistrates to collect as many Highlanders as would suffice for cutting off any part of the pirate's crew that might venture, in quest of plunder, into a city full of high houses and narrow lanes, and every way well calculated for defence. The eager delight with which the young apprentice now listened to the tales of this fine old man's early days produced an invitation to his residence among the mountains; and to this excursion he probably devoted the few weeks of an autumnal vacation — whether in 1786 or 1787 it is of no great consequence to ascertain.

In the Introduction to one of his Novels he has preserved a vivid picture of his sensations when the vale of

Perth first burst on his view, in the course of his progress to Invernahyle, and the description has made classical ground of the *Wicks of Baiglie*, the spot from which that beautiful landscape was surveyed. "Childish wonder, indeed," he says, "was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old, and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift, like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, while much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection." So speaks the poet; and who will not recognize his habitual modesty in thus undervaluing, as uninfluential in comparison with some affair of worldly business, the ineffaceable impression thus stamped on the glowing imagination of his boyhood?

I need not quote the numerous passages scattered over his writings, both early and late, in which he dwells with fond affection on the chivalrous character of Invernahyle — the delight with which he heard the veteran describe his broadsword duel with Rob Roy — his campaigns with Mar and Charles Edward — and his long seclusion (as pictured in the story of Bradwardine) within a rocky cave situated not far from his own house, while it was garrisoned by a party of English soldiers, after the battle of Culloden. Here, too, still survived the trusty henchman who had attended the chieftain in many a bloody field and perilous escape, the same "grim-looking old Highlander" who was in the act of cutting down Colonel

Whitefoord with his Lochaber axe at Prestonpans when his master arrested the blow — an incident to which Invernahyle owed his life, and we are indebted for another of the most striking pages in Waverley.

I have often heard Scott mention some curious particulars of his first visit to the remote fastness of one of these Highland friends; but whether he told the story of Invernahyle, or of one of his own relations of the Clan Campbell, I do not recollect; I rather think the latter was the case. On reaching the brow of a bleak eminence overhanging the primitive tower and its tiny patch of cultivated ground, he found his host and three sons, and perhaps half-a-dozen attendant *gillies*, all stretched half asleep in their tartans upon the heath, with guns and dogs, and a profusion of game about them; while in the courtyard, far below, appeared a company of women actively engaged in loading a cart with manure. The stranger was not a little astonished when he discovered, on descending from the height, that among these industrious females were the laird's own lady, and two or three of her daughters; but they seemed quite unconscious of having been detected in an occupation unsuitable to their rank — retired presently to their "bowers," and when they reappeared in other dresses, retained no traces of their morning's work, except complexions glowing with a radiant freshness, for one evening of which many a high-bred beauty would have bartered half her diamonds. He found the young ladies not ill informed, and exceedingly agreeable; and the song and the dance seemed to form the invariable termination of their busy days. I must not forget his admiration at the principal article of this laird's first course; namely, a gigantic *haggis*, borne into the hall in a wicker basket by two half-naked Celts, while the piper strutted fiercely behind them, blowing a tempest of dissonance.

These Highland visits were repeated almost every summer for several successive years, and perhaps even the first of them was in some degree connected with his professional business. At all events, it was to his allotted task of enforcing the execution of a legal instrument against some Maclarens, refractory tenants of Stewart of Appin, brother-in-law to Invernahyle, that Scott owed his introduction to the scenery of The Lady of the Lake. "An escort of a sergeant and six men," he says, "was obtained from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling, and the author, then a Writer's Apprentice, equivalent to the honorable situation of an attorney's clerk, was invested with the superintendence of the expedition, with directions to see that the messenger discharged his duty fully, and that the gallant sergeant did not exceed his part by committing violence or plunder. And thus it happened, oddly enough, that the author first entered the romantic scenery of Loch Katrine, of which he may perhaps say he has somewhat extended the reputation, riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear guard, and loaded arms. The sergeant was absolutely a Highland Sergeant Kite, full of stories of Rob Roy and of himself, and a very good companion. We experienced no interruption whatever, and when we came to Invernenty, found the house deserted. We took up our quarters for the night, and used some of the victuals which we found there. The Maclarens, who probably had never thought of any serious opposition, went to America, where, having had some slight share in removing them from their *paupera regna*, I sincerely hope they prospered."[1]

That he entered with ready zeal into such professional business as inferred Highland expeditions with comrades who had known Rob Roy, no one will think strange; but more than one of his biographers allege that in the ordinary indoor fagging of the chamber in George's Square, he was always an unwilling, and rarely an efficient assistant. Their addition, that he often played chess with one of his companions in the office, and had to conceal

[1] Introduction to *Rob Roy*.

the board with precipitation when the old gentleman's footsteps were heard on the staircase, is, I do not doubt, true; and we may remember along with it his own insinuation that his father was sometimes poring in his secret nook over Spottiswoode or Wodrow, when his apprentices supposed him to be deep in Dirleton's Doubts, or Stair's decisions. But the Memoir of 1808, so candid — indeed more than candid — as to many juvenile irregularities, contains no confession that supports the broad assertion to which I have alluded; nor can I easily believe, that with his affection for his father, and that sense of duty which seems to have been inherent in his character, and, lastly, with the evidence of a most severe training in industry which the habits of his after-life presented, it is at all deserving of serious acceptation. His mere handwriting, indeed, continued, during the whole of his prime, to afford most striking and irresistible proof how completely he must have submitted himself for some very considerable period to the mechanical discipline of his father's office. It spoke to months after months of this humble toil, as distinctly as the illegible scrawl of Lord Byron did to his self-mastership from the hour that he left Harrow. There are some little technical tricks, such as no gentleman who has not been subjected to a similar regimen ever can fall into, which he practised invariably while composing his poetry, which appear not unfrequently on the MSS. of his best novels, and which now and then dropt instinctively from his pen, even in the private letters and diaries of his closing years. I allude particularly to a sort of flourish at the bottom of the page, originally, I presume, adopted in engrossing as a safeguard against the intrusion of a forged line between the legitimate text and the attesting signature. He was quite sensible that this ornament might as well be dispensed with; and his family often heard him mutter, after involuntarily performing it, "There goes the old shop again!"

I dwell on this matter because it was always his favorite tenet, in contradiction to what he called the cant of sonneteers, that there is no necessary connection between genius and an aversion or contempt for any of the common duties of life; he thought, on the contrary, that to spend some fair portion of every day in any matter of fact occupation is good for the higher faculties themselves in the upshot. In a word, from beginning to end, he piqued himself on being *a man of business;* and did — with one sad and memorable exception — whatever the ordinary course of things threw in his way, in exactly the businesslike fashion which might have been expected from the son of a thoroughbred old Clerk to the Signet, who had never deserted his father's profession.

In the winter of 1788, however, his apprentice habits were exposed to a new danger; and from that date I believe them to have undergone a considerable change. He was then sent to attend the lectures of the Professor of Civil Law in the University, this course forming part of the usual professional education of Writers to the Signet, as well as of Advocates. For some time his companions, when in Edinburgh, had been chiefly, almost solely, his brother-apprentices and the clerks in his father's office. He had latterly seen comparatively little even of the better of his old High School friends, such as Ferguson and Irving — for though both of these also were writer's apprentices, they had been indentured to other masters, and each had naturally formed new intimacies within his own chamber. The Civil Law class brought him again into daily contact with both Irving and Ferguson, as well as others of his earlier acquaintance of the higher ranks; but it also led him into the society of some young gentlemen previously unknown to him, who had from the outset been destined for the Bar, and whose conversation, tinctured with certain prejudices natural to scions of what he calls in Redgauntlet *the Scottish noblesse de la robe*, soon banished from his mind every thought of ultimately adhering to the secondary branch of the law. He found these future barristers cultivating general literature, without the least apprehension that such elegant pursuits could be regarded by any one as interfering with the proper studies of their professional career; justly believing, on the contrary, that for the higher class of forensic exertion some acquaintance with almost every branch of science and letters is a necessary preparative. He contrasted their liberal aspirations, and the encouragement which these received in their domestic circles, with the narrower views which predominated in his own home; and resolved to gratify his ambition by adopting a most precarious walk in life, instead of adhering to that in which he might have counted with perfect security on the early attainment of pecuniary independence. This resolution appears to have been foreseen by his father, long before it was announced in terms; and the handsome manner in which the old gentleman conducted himself upon the occasion is remembered with dutiful gratitude in the preceding Autobiography.

The most important of these new alliances was the intimate friendship which he now formed with Mr. John Irving's near relation, William Clerk of Eldin, of whose powerful talents and extensive accomplishments we shall hereafter meet with many enthusiastic notices. It was in company with this gentleman that he entered the debating societies described in his Memoir; through him he soon became linked in the closest intimacy with George Cranstoun (now Lord Corehouse), George Abercromby (now Lord Abercromby), John James Edmonstone[1] of Newton (whose mother was sister of Sir Ralph Abercromby), Patrick Murray of Simprim, Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre, and a group of other young men, all high in birth and connection, and all remarkable in early life for the qualities which afterwards led them to eminent station, or adorned it. The introduction to their several families is alluded to by Scott as having opened to him abundantly certain advantages, which no one could have been more qualified to improve, but from which he had hitherto been in great measure debarred in consequence of the retired habits of his parents.

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[1] Mr. Edmonstone died 19th April, 1840. — (1848.)

Mr. Clerk says that he had been struck from the first day he entered the Civil Law class-room with something odd and remarkable in Scott's appearance; what this something was he cannot now recall, but he remembers telling his companion some time afterwards that he thought he looked like a *hautboy player*. Scott was amused with this notion, as he had never touched a musical instrument of any kind; but I fancy his friend had been watching a certain noticeable but altogether indescribable play of the upper lip when in an abstracted mood. He rallied Walter, he says, during one of their first evening walks together, on the slovenliness of his dress: he wore a pair of corduroy breeches, much glazed by the rubbing of his staff, which he immediately flourished — and said, "They be good enough for drinking in — let us go and have some oysters in the Covenant Close."

Convivial habits were then indulged among the young men of Edinburgh, whether students of law, solicitors, or barristers, to an extent now happily unknown; and this anecdote recalls some striking hints on that subject which occur in Scott's brief Autobiography. That he partook profusely in the juvenile bacchanalia of that day, and continued to take a plentiful share in such jollities down to the time of his marriage, are facts worthy of being distinctly stated; for no man in mature life was more habitually averse to every sort of intemperance. He could, when I first knew him, swallow a great quantity of wine without being at all visibly disordered by it; but nothing short of some very particular occasion could ever induce him to put this strength of head to a trial;

and I have heard him many times utter words which no one in the days of his youthful temptation can be the worse for remembering: — "Depend upon it, of all vices, drinking is the most incompatible with greatness."

The liveliness of his conversation — the strange variety of his knowledge — and above all, perhaps, the portentous tenacity of his memory — riveted more and more Clerk's attention, and commanded the wonder of all his new allies; but of these extraordinary gifts Scott himself appeared to be little conscious; or at least he impressed them all as attaching infinitely greater consequence — (exactly as had been the case with him in the days of the Cowgate Port and the kittle nine steps) — to feats of personal agility and prowess. William Clerk's brother, James, a midshipman in the navy, happened to come home from a cruise in the Mediterranean shortly after this acquaintance began, and Scott and the sailor became almost at sight "sworn brothers." In order to complete his time under the late Sir Alexander Cochrane, who was then on the Leith station, James Clerk obtained the command of a lugger, and the young friends often made little excursions to sea with him. "The first time Scott dined on board," says William Clerk, "we met before embarking at a tavern in Leith — it was a large party, mostly midshipmen, and strangers to him, and our host introducing his landsmen guests said, 'My brother you know, gentlemen; as for Mr. Scott, mayhap you may take him for a poor lamiter, but he is the first to begin a row, and the last to end it;' which eulogium he confirmed with some of the expletives of Tom Pipes."[1] When, many years afterwards, Clerk read The Pirate, he was startled by the resurrection of a hundred traits of the table-talk of this lugger; but the author has since traced some of the most striking passages in that novel to his recollection of the almost childish period when he hung on his own brother Robert's stories about Rodney's battles and the haunted *keys* of the West Indies.

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[1] "Dinna steer him," says Hobbie Elliot; "ye may think Elshie 's but a lamiter, but I warrant ye, grippie for grippie, he 'll gar the blue blood spin frae your nails — his hand 's like a smith's vice." — *Black Dwarf*, chap. xvii.

One morning Scott called on Clerk, and, exhibiting his stick all cut and marked, told him he had been attacked in the streets the night before by three fellows, against whom he had defended himself for an hour. "By Shrewsbury clock?" said his friend. "No," said Scott, smiling, "by the Tron." But thenceforth, adds Mr. Clerk, and for twenty years after, he called his walking stick by the name of "Shrewsbury."

With these comrades Scott now resumed, and pushed to a much greater extent, his early habits of wandering over the country in quest of castles and other remains of antiquity, his passion for which derived a new impulse from the conversation of the celebrated John Clerk of Eldin,[1] the father of his friend. William Clerk well remembers his father telling a story which was introduced in due time in The Antiquary. While he was visiting his grandfather, Sir John Clerk, at Dumcrieff, in Dumfries-shire, many years before this time, the old Baronet carried some English virtuosos to see a supposed Roman camp; and on his exclaiming at a particular spot, "This I take to have been the Prætorium," a herdsman who stood by answered, "Prætorium here Prætorium there, I made it wi' a flaughter spade."[2] Many traits of the elder Clerk were, his son has no doubt, embroidered on the character of George Constable in the composition of Jonathan Oldbuck. The old gentleman's enthusiasm for antiquities was often played on by these young friends, but more effectually by his eldest son, John Clerk (Lord Eldin), who, having a great genius for art, used to amuse himself with manufacturing mutilated heads, which, after being buried for a convenient time in the ground, were accidentally discovered in some fortunate hour, and received by the laird with great honor as valuable accessions to his museum.[1]

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[1] Author of the famous Essay on dividing the Line in Sea-fights.

[2] Compare *The Antiquary*, chap. iv.

On a fishing excursion to a loch near Howgate, among the Moorfoot Hills, Scott, Clerk, Irving, and Abercromby spent the night at a little public-house kept by one Mrs. Margaret Dods. When St. Ronan's Well was published, Clerk, meeting Scott in the street, observed, "That 's an odd name; surely I have met with it somewhere before." Scott smiled, said, "Don't you remember Howgate?" and passed on. The name alone, however, was taken from the Howgate hostess.

At one of their drinking bouts of those days William Clerk, Sir P. Murray, Edmonstone, and Abercromby, being of the party, the sitting was prolonged to a very late hour, and Scott fell asleep. When he awoke, his friends succeeded in convincing him that he had sung a song in the course of the evening, and sung it extremely well. How must these gentlemen have chuckled when they read Frank Osbaldistone's account of his revels in the old hall! "It has even been reported by maligners that I sung a song while under this vinous influence; but as I remember nothing of it, and never attempted to turn a tune in all my life, either before or since, I would willingly hope there is no actual foundation for the calumny."[2]

On one of his first long walks with Clerk and others of the same set, their pace, being about four miles an hour, was found rather too much for Scott, and he offered to contract for three, which measure was thenceforth considered as the legal one. At this rate they often continued to wander from five in the morning till eight in the evening, halting for such refreshment at mid-day as any village alehouse might afford. On many occasions, however, they had stretched so far into the country, that they were obliged to be absent from home all night; and though great was the alarm which the first occurrence of this sort created in George's Square, the family soon got accustomed to such things, and little notice was taken, even though Walter remained away for the better part of a week. I have heard him laugh heartily over the recollections of one protracted excursion, towards the close of which the party found themselves a long day's walk — thirty miles, I think — from Edinburgh, without a single sixpence left among them. "We were put to our shifts," said he; "but we asked every now and then at a cottage door for a drink of water; and one or two of the good-wives, observing our worn-out looks, brought forth milk in place of water — so with that, and hips and haws, we came in little the worse." His father met him with some impatient questions as to what he had been living on so long, for the old man well knew how scantily his pocket was supplied. "Pretty much like the young ravens," answered he; "I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in The Vicar of Wakefield. If I had his art I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage over the world." — "I doubt," said the grave Clerk to the Signet, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape gut*." Some allusions to reproaches of this kind occur in the Memoir; and we shall find others in letters subsequent to his admission at the Bar.[1]

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[1] The most remarkable of these *antique heads* was so highly appreciated by another distinguished connoisseur, the late Earl of Buchan, that he carried it off from Mr. Clerk's museum, and presented it to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries — in whose collection, no doubt, it may still be admired.

[2] *Rob Roy*, chap. xii.

The debating club formed among these young friends at this era of their studies was called *The Literary Society;* and is not to be confounded with the more celebrated Speculative Society, which Scott did not join for two years later. At *The Literary* he spoke frequently, and very amusingly and sensibly, but was not at all numbered among the most brilliant members. He had a world of knowledge to produce; but he had not acquired the art of arranging it to the best advantage in a continued address; nor, indeed, did he ever, I think, except under the influence of strong personal feeling, even when years and fame had given him full confidence in himself, exhibit upon any occasion the powers of oral eloquence. His antiquarian information, however, supplied many an interesting feature in these evenings of discussion. He had already dabbled in Anglo-Saxon and the Norse Sagas: in his Essay on Imitations of Popular Poetry, he alludes to these studies as having facilitated his acquisition of German: — But he was deep especially in Fordun and Wyntoun, and all the Scotch chronicles; and his friends rewarded him by the honorable title of *Duns Scotus.*

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[1] After the cautious father had had further opportunity of observing his son's proceedings, his wife happened one night to express some anxiety on the protracted absence of Walter and his brother Thomas. "My dear Annie," said the old man, "Tom is with Walter this time; and have you not yet perceived that wherever Walter goes, he is pretty sure to find his bread buttered on both sides?" — *From Mrs. Thomas Scott.* — (1839.)

A smaller society, formed with less ambitious views, originated in a ride to Pennycuik, the seat of the head of Mr. Clerk's family, whose elegant hospitalities are recorded in the Memoir. This was called, by way of excellence, *The Club*, and I believe it is continued under the same name to this day. Here, too, Walter had his sobriquet; and — his corduroy breeches, I presume, not being as yet worn out — it was *Colonel Grogg.*[1]

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[1] "The members of *The Club* used to meet on Friday evenings in a room in Carrubber's Close, from which some of them usually adjourned to sup at an oyster tavern in the same neighborhood. In after-life, those of them who chanced to be in Edinburgh dined together twice every year, at the close of the winter and summer sessions of the Law Courts; and during thirty years, Sir Walter was very rarely absent on these occasions. It was also a rule, that when any member received an appointment or promotion, he should give a dinner to his old associates; and they had accordingly two such dinners from him — one when he became Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and another when he was named Clerk of Session. The original

Meantime he had not broken up his connection with Rosebank; he appears to have spent several weeks in the autumn, both of 1788 and 1789, under his uncle's roof; and it was, I think, of his journey thither, in the last named year, that he used to tell an anecdote, which I shall here set down — how shorn, alas, of all the accessories that gave it life when he recited it. Calling, before he set out, on one of the ancient spinsters of his family, to inquire if she had any message for Kelso, she retired, and presently placed in his hands a packet of some bulk and weight, which required, she said, very particular attention. He took it without examining the address, and carried it in his pocket next day, not at all to the lightening of a forty miles' ride in August. On his arrival, it turned out to contain one of the old lady's pattens, sealed up for a particular cobbler in Kelso, and accompanied with fourpence to pay for mending it, and special directions that it might be brought back to her by the same economical conveyance.

It will be seen from the following letter, the earliest of Scott's writing that has fallen into my hands, that professional business had some share in this excursion to Kelso; but I consider with more interest the brief allusion to a day at Sandy-Knowe: —

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members were, in number, nineteen — viz., *Sir Walter Scott*, Mr. William Clerk, Sir A. Ferguson, Mr. James Edmonstone, Mr. George Abercromby (Lord Abercromby), Mr. D. Boyle (now Lord Justice-Clerk), Mr. James Glassford (Advocate), Mr. James Ferguson (Clerk of Session), Mr. David Monypenny (Lord Pitmilly), Mr. Robert Davidson (Professor of Law at Glasgow), Sir William Rae, Bart., Sir Patrick Murray, Bart., *David Douglas* (Lord Reston), Mr. Murray of Simprim, Mr. Monteith of Closeburn, *Mr. Archibald Miller* (son of Professor Miller), *Baron Reden*, a Hanoverian ; the Honorable *Thomas Douglas*, afterwards Earl of Selkirk, — and John Irving. Except the five whose names are *underlined*, these original members are all still alive." — *Letter from Mr. Irving*, dated 29th September, 1836.

TO MRS. SCOTT, GEORGE'S SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

(*With a parcel.*)

ROSEBANK, 5th September, 1788.

DEAR MOTHER, — I was favored with your letter, and send you Anne's stockings along with this: I would have sent them last week, but had some expectations of a private opportunity. I have been very happy for this fortnight; we have some plan or other for every day. Last week my uncle, my cousin William,[1] and I, rode to Smailholm, and from thence walked to Sandy-Knowe Craigs, where we spent the whole day, and made a very hearty dinner by the side of the Orderlaw Well, on some cold beef and bread and cheese: we had also a small case-bottle of rum to make grog with, which we drank to the Sandy-Knowe bairns, and all their connections. This jaunt gave me much pleasure, and had I time, I would give you a more full account of it.

The fishing has been hitherto but indifferent, and I fear I shall not be able to accomplish my promise with regard to the wild ducks. I was out on Friday, and only saw three. I may probably, however, send you a hare, as my uncle has got a present of two greyhounds from Sir H. MacDougall, and as he has a license, only waits till the corn is off the ground to commence coursing. Be it known to you, however, I am not altogether employed in amusements, for I have got two or three clients besides my uncle, and am busy drawing tacks and contracts, — not, however, of marriage. I am in a fair way of making money, if I stay here long.

Here I have written a pretty long letter, and nothing in it; but you know writing to one's friends is the next thing to seeing them. My love to my father and the boys, from, Dear Mother, your dutiful and affectionate son,

WALTER SCOTT.

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[1] The present Laird of Raeburn.

It appears from James Ballantyne's *memoranda*, that having been very early bound apprentice to a solicitor in Kelso, he had no intercourse with Scott during the three or four years that followed their companionship at the school of Lancelot Whale; but Ballantyne was now sent to spend a winter in Edinburgh, for the completion of his professional education, and in the course of his attendance on the Scots Law class, became a member of a young Teviotdale club, where Walter Scott seldom failed to make his appearance. They supped together, it seems, once a month; and here, as in the associations above mentioned, good fellowship was often pushed beyond the limits of modern indulgence. The strict intimacy between Scott and Ballantyne was not at this time renewed, — their avocations prevented it, — but the latter was no uninterested observer of his old comrade's bearing on this new scene. "Upon all these occasions," he says, "one of the principal features of his character was displayed as conspicuously as I believe it ever was at any later period. This was the remarkable ascendency he never failed to exhibit among his young companions, and which appeared to arise from their involuntary and unconscious submission to the same firmness of understanding, and gentle exercise of it, which produced the same effects throughout his after-life. Where there was always a good deal of drinking, there was of course now and then a good deal of quarrelling. But three words from Walter Scott never failed to put all such propensities to quietness."

Mr. Ballantyne's account of his friend's peace-making exertions at this club may seem a little at variance with some preceding details. There is a difference, however, between encouraging quarrels in the bosom of a convivial party, and taking a fair part in a *row* between one's own party and another. But Ballantyne adds, that at *The Teviotdale*, Scott was always remarkable for being the most temperate of the set; and if the club consisted chiefly of persons, like Ballantyne himself, somewhat inferior to Scott in birth and station, his carefulness both of sobriety and decorum at their meetings was but another feature of his unchanged and unchangeable character — *qualis ab incepto.*

At one of the many merry suppers of this time Walter Scott had said something, of which, on recollecting himself next morning, he was sensible that his friend Clerk might have reason to complain. He sent him accordingly a note apologetical, which has by some accident been preserved, and which I am sure every reader will agree with me in considering well worthy of preservation. In it Scott contrives to make use of *both* his own club designations, and addresses his friend by another of the same order, which Clerk had received in consequence of comparing himself on some forgotten occasion to Sir John Brute in the play. This characteristic document is as follows: —

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ.

DEAR BARONET, — I am sorry to find that our friend Colonel Grogg has behaved with a very undue degree of vehemence in a dispute with you last night, occasioned by what I am convinced was a gross misconception of your expressions. As the Colonel, though a military man, is not too haughty to acknowledge an error, he has commissioned me to make his apology as a mutual friend, which I am convinced you will accept from yours ever,

DUNS SCOTUS.

Given at Castle Duns,
Monday.

I should perhaps have mentioned sooner that when first *Duns Scotus* became *the Baronet's* daily companion, this new alliance was observed with considerable jealousy by some of his former inseparables of the writing office. At the next annual supper of the clerks and apprentices, the *gaudy* of the chamber, this feeling showed itself in various ways, and when the cloth was drawn, Walter rose and asked what was meant. "Well," said one of the lads, "since you will have it out, you are *cutting* your old friends for the sake of Clerk and some more of these dons that look down on the like of us." "Gentlemen," answered Scott, "I will never *cut* any man unless I detect him in scoundrelism; but I know not what right any of you have to interfere with my choice of my company. If any one thought I had injured him, he would have done well to ask an explanation in a more private manner. As it is, I fairly own, that though I like many of you very much, and have long done so, I think William Clerk well worth you all put together." The senior in the chair was wise enough to laugh, and the evening passed off without further disturbance.

As one effect of his office education, Scott soon began to preserve in regular files the letters addressed to him; and from the style and tone of such letters, as Mr. Southey observes in his Life of Cowper, a man's character may often be gathered even more surely than from those written by himself. The first series of any considerable extent in his collection includes letters dated as far back as 1786, and proceeds, with not many interruptions, down beyond the period when his fame had been established. I regret, that from the delicate nature of the transactions chiefly dwelt upon in the earlier of these communications, I dare not make a free use of them; but I feel it my duty to record the strong impression they have left on my own mind of high generosity of affection, coupled with calm judgment, and perseverance in well-doing, on the part of the stripling Scott. To these indeed every line in the collection bears pregnant testimony. A young gentleman, born of good family, and heir to a tolerable fortune, is sent to Edinburgh College, and is seen partaking, along with Scott, through several apparently happy and careless years, of the studies and amusements of which the reader may by this time have formed an adequate notion. By degrees, from the usual license of his equal comrades, he sinks into habits of a looser description — becomes reckless, contracts debts, irritates his own family almost beyond hope of reconciliation, is virtually cast off by them, runs away from Scotland, forms a marriage far below his condition in a remote part of the sister kingdom — and, when the poor girl has made him a father, then first begins to open his eyes to the full consequences of his mad career. He appeals to Scott, by this time in his eighteenth year, "as the truest and noblest of friends," who had given him "the earliest and the strongest warnings," had assisted him "the most generously throughout all his wanderings and distresses," and will not now abandon him in his "penitent lowliness of misery," the result of his seeing "virtue and innocence involved in the punishment of his errors." I find Scott obtaining the slow and reluctant assistance of his own careful father — who had long before observed this youth's wayward disposition, and often cautioned his son against the connection — to intercede with the unfortunate wanderer's family, and procure, if possible, some mitigation of their sentence. The result is that he is furnished with the scanty means of removing himself to a distant colony, where he spends several years in the drudgery of a very humble occupation, but by degrees establishes for himself a new character, which commands the anxious interest of strangers; — and I find these strangers, particularly a benevolent and venerable clergyman, addressing, on his behalf, without his privacy, the young person, as yet unknown to the world, whom the object of their concern had painted to them as "uniting the warm feelings of youth with the sense of years" — whose hair he had, "from the day he left England, worn next his heart." Just at the time when this appeal reached Scott, he hears that his exiled friend's father has died suddenly, and, after all, intestate; he has actually been taking steps to ascertain the truth of the case at the moment when the American despatch is laid on his table. I leave the reader to guess with what pleasure Scott has to communicate the intelligence that his repentant and reformed friend may return to take possession of his inheritance. The letters before me contain touching pictures of their meeting — of Walter's first visit to the ancient hall, where a happy family are now assembled — and of the affectionately respectful sense which his friend retained ever afterwards of all that he had done for him in the season of his struggles. But what a grievous loss is Scott's part of this correspondence! I find the comrade over and over again expressing his admiration of the letters in which Scott described to him his early tours both in the Highlands and the Border dales: I find him prophesying from them, as early as 1789, "one day your pen will make you famous," — and already, in 1790, urging him to concentrate his ambition on a "history of the clans."[1]

This young gentleman appears to have had a decided turn for literature; and, though in his earlier epistles he makes no allusion to Scott as ever dabbling in rhyme, he often inserts verses of his own, some of which are not without merit. There is a long letter in doggerel, dated 1788, descriptive of a ramble from Edinburgh to Carlisle — of which I may quote the opening lines, as a sample of the simple habits of these young people: —

"At four in the morning, I won't be too sure,
Yet, if right I remember me, that was the hour,
When with Fergusson, Ramsay, and Jones, sir, and you,
From Auld Reekie I southward my route did pursue.
But two of the dogs (yet God bless them, I said)
Grew tired, and but set me half way to Lasswade,
While Jones, you, and I, Wat, went on without flutter,
And at Symonds's feasted on good bread and butter;
Where I, wanting a sixpence, you lugged out a shilling,
And paid for me too, though I was most unwilling.

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[1] All Scott's letters to the friend here alluded to are said to have perished in an accidental fire.

> We parted — be sure I was ready to snivel —
> Jones and you to go home — I to go to the devil."

In a letter of later date, describing the adventurer's captivation with the cottage maiden whom he afterwards married, there are some lines of a very different stamp. This couplet at least seems to me exquisite: —

> "Lowly beauty, dear friend, beams with primitive grace,
> And 't is innocence' self plays the rogue in her face."

I find in another letter of this collection — and it is among the first of the series — the following passage: — "Your Quixotism, dear Walter, was highly characteristic. From the description of the blooming fair, as she appeared when she lowered her *manteau vert*, I am hopeful you have not dropt the acquaintance. At least I am certain some of our more rakish friends would have been glad enough of such an introduction." This hint I cannot help connecting with the first scene of *The Lady Green Mantle* in Redgauntlet; but indeed I could easily trace many more coincidences between these letters and that novel, though at the same time I have no sort of doubt that William Clerk was, in the main, *Darsie Latimer*, while Scott himself unquestionably sat for his own picture in young *Alan Fairford*.

The allusion to "our more rakish friends" is in keeping with the whole strain of this juvenile correspondence. Throughout there occurs no coarse or even jocular suggestion as to the conduct of *Scott* in that particular, as to which most youths of his then age are so apt to lay up stores of self-reproach. In this season of hot and impetuous blood he may not have escaped quite blameless, but I have the concurrent testimony of all the most intimate among his surviving associates, that he was remarkably free from such indiscretions; that while his high sense of honor shielded him from the remotest dream of tampering with female innocence, he had an instinctive delicacy about him which made him recoil with utter disgust from low and vulgar debaucheries.

His friends, I have heard more than one of them confess, used often to rally him on the coldness of his nature. By degrees they discovered that he had, from almost the dawn of the passions, cherished a secret attachment, which continued, through all the most perilous stage of life, to act as a romantic charm in safeguard of virtue. This — (however he may have disguised the story by mixing it up with the Quixotic adventure of the damsel in the Green Mantle) — this was the early and innocent affection to which we owe the tenderest pages, not only of Redgauntlet, but of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, and of Rokeby. In all of these works the heroine has certain distinctive features, drawn from one and the same haunting dream of his manly adolescence.

It was about 1790, according to Mr. William Clerk, that Scott was observed to lay aside that carelessness, not to say slovenliness, as to dress, which used to furnish matter for joking at the beginning of their acquaintance. He now did himself more justice in these little matters, became fond of mixing in general female society, and, as his friend expresses it, "began to set up for a squire of dames."

His personal appearance at this time was not unengaging. A lady of high rank,[1] who well remembers him in the Old Assembly Rooms, says, "Young Walter Scott was a comely creature." He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill health, and had a fresh, brilliant complexion. His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful; and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humor in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady's eye. His

[1] The late Countess-Duchess of Sutherland. — (1848.)

figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules; the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished; the whole outline that of extraordinary vigor, without as yet a touch of clumsiness. When he had acquired a little facility of manner, his conversation must have been such as could have dispensed with any exterior advantages, and certainly brought swift forgiveness for the one unkindness of nature. I have heard him, in talking of this part of his life, say, with an arch simplicity of look and tone which those who were familiar with him can fill in for themselves — "It was a proud night with me when I first found that a pretty young woman could think it worth her while to sit and talk with me, hour after hour, in a corner of the ballroom, while all the world were capering in our view."

I believe, however, that the "pretty young woman" here specially alluded to had occupied his attention long before he ever appeared in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, or any of his friends took note of him as "setting up for a squire of dames." I have been told that their acquaintance began in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, where rain beginning to fall one Sunday as the congregation were dispersing, Scott happened to offer his umbrella, and the tender being accepted, so escorted her to her residence, which proved to be at no great distance from his own.[1] To return from church together had, it seems, grown into something like a custom, before they met in society, Mrs. Scott being of the party. It then appeared that she and the lady's mother had been companions in their youth, though, both living secludedly, they had scarcely seen each other for many years; and the two matrons now renewed their former intercourse. But no acquaintance appears to have existed between the fathers of the young people, until things had advanced in appearance farther than met the approbation of the good Clerk to the Signet.

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[1] In one of his latest articles for the *Quarterly Review*, Scott observes, "There have been instances of love tales being favorably received in England, when told under an umbrella, and in the middle of a shower." — *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xviii.

Being aware that the young lady, who was very highly connected, had prospects of fortune far above his son's, the upright and honorable man conceived it his duty to give her parents warning that he observed a degree of intimacy which, if allowed to go on, might involve the parties in future pain and disappointment. He had heard his son talk of a contemplated excursion to the part of the country in which his neighbor's estates lay, and not doubting that Walter's real object was different from that which he announced, introduced himself with a frank statement that he wished no such affair to proceed without the express sanction of those most interested in the happiness of persons as yet too young to calculate consequences for themselves. The northern Baronet had heard nothing of the young apprentice's intended excursion, and appeared to treat the whole business very lightly. He thanked Mr. Scott for his scrupulous attention — but added that he believed he was mistaken; and this paternal interference, which Walter did not hear of till long afterwards, produced no change in his relations with the object of his growing attachment.

I have neither the power nor the wish to give in detail the sequel of this story. It is sufficient to say, that after he had through several long years nourished the dream of an ultimate union with this lady, his hopes terminated in her being married to a gentleman of the highest character, to whom some affectionate allusions occur in one of the greatest of his works, and who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to his early rival throughout the anxieties and distresses of 1826 and 1827. I have said enough for my purpose — which was only to

WILLIAMINA STUART

From the miniature by Cosway

render intelligible a few allusions in the letters which I shall by and by have to introduce; but I may add that I have no doubt this unfortunate passion, besides one good effect already adverted to, had a powerful influence in nerving Scott's mind for the sedulous diligence with which he pursued his proper legal studies, as described in his Memoir, during the two or three years that preceded his call to the Bar.[1]

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[1] [The object of the strongest, or perhaps it should be said the single, passion of Scott's life was Williamina, the only child of Sir John Wishart Belsches Stuart of Fettercairn, and his wife, the Lady Jane Leslie, daughter of David, Earl of Leven and Melville. Beside beauty of person, sweetness of disposition, a quick intelligence, and cultivated tastes, Miss Stuart seems to have possessed in large measure that indefinable but potent gift, which is called charm. Through some misapprehension, Lockhart appears to have antedated the beginning of her influence over Scott, as in 1790 she was hardly more than a child, and she was not sixteen when he was called to the Bar, though the meeting in the Greyfriars' Churchyard had probably already taken place. The "three years of dreaming" were ended, as the biographer narrates, in the autumn of 1796. On January 19, 1797, Miss Stuart was married to William Forbes, son and heir of Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, an eminent banker, and the author of a Life of his friend Beattie. Scott's affectionate allusions to his early rival will be found in the Introduction to the Fourth Canto of *Marmion:* —

"And one whose name I may not say, —
For not mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he," —

an Introduction inscribed to James Skene of Rubislaw, whose marriage to a daughter of Sir William had been speedily followed by the father's death. Mr. Forbes succeeded to the baronetcy in 1806, and his wife, on the death of Sir John Stuart, inherited Fettercairn. She died December 5, 1810, after thirteen years of unclouded happiness. Dean Boyle has recorded that Lockhart once read to him the letter "full of beauty," which Scott wrote to the bereaved husband at this time. Lady Stuart-Forbes left six children, four sons and two daughters. The three sons who survived to maturity all were men of unusual ability.

The story of Williamina Stuart's brief life was told for the first time with any fulness by Miss F. M. F. Skene in the *Century Magazine* for July, 1899. As the daughter of one of Scott's earliest and dearest friends and the niece of Sir William Forbes, she could write with knowledge. She says that from the day of his wife's death, "so far as society and the outer world were concerned, Sir William Forbes may be said to have died with her. He retired into the most complete seclusion, maintaining the heart-stricken silence of a grief too deep for words, and scarcely seeing even his own nearest relatives. Only at the call of duty did he ever emerge from his retirement," as when he proved so stanch a friend to Scott in the darkest days of 1826 and 1827.

A charming portrait, after a miniature by Cosway, accompanies Miss Skene's sketch of Lady Stuart-Forbes, — a pleasing contrast to the picture, without merit, either as a work of art or as a likeness, which was engraved for the Memoir of her youngest son, James David Forbes.]

CHAPTER VI

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED. — STUDIES FOR THE BAR. — EXCURSION TO NORTHUMBERLAND. — LETTER ON FLODDEN FIELD. — CALL TO THE BAR

1790–1792

THE two following letters may sufficiently illustrate the writer's every-day existence in the autumn of 1790. The first, addressed to his *fidus Achates*, has not a few indications of the vein of humor from which he afterwards drew so largely in his novels; and indeed, even in his last days, he delighted to tell the story of the Jedburgh bailies' *boots*.

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ., AT JOHN CLERK'S, ESQ., OF ELDIN, PRINCE'S STREET, EDINBURGH.

ROSEBANK, 6th August, 1790.

DEAR WILLIAM, — Here am I, the weather, according to your phrase, most bitchiferous; the Tweed, within twenty yards of the window at which I am writing, swelled from bank to brae, and roaring like thunder. It is paying you but a poor compliment to tell you I waited for such a day to perform my promise of writing, but you must consider that it is the point here to reserve such within-doors employment as we think most agreeable for bad weather, which in the country always wants something to help it away. In fair weather we are far from wanting amusement, which at present is my business; on the contrary, every fair day has some plan of pleasure annexed to it, in so much that I can hardly believe I have been here above two days, so swiftly does the time pass away. You will ask how it is employed? Why, negatively, I read *no* civil law. Heineccius and his fellow-worthies have ample time to gather a venerable coat of dust, which they merit by their dulness. As to my positive amusements, besides riding, fishing, and the other usual sports of the country, I often spend an hour or two in the evening in shooting herons, which are numerous on this part of the river. To do this I have no farther to go than the bottom of our garden, which literally hangs over the river. When you fire at a bird, she always crosses the river, and when again shot at with ball, usually returns to your side, and will cross in this way several times before she takes wing. This furnishes fine sport; nor are they easily shot, as you never can get very near them. The intervals between their appearing are spent very agreeably in eating gooseberries.

Yesterday was St. James's Fair, a day of great business. There was a great show of black cattle — I mean of ministers; the narrowness of their stipends here obliges many of them to enlarge their incomes by taking farms and grazing cattle. This, in my opinion, diminishes their respectability, nor can the farmer be supposed to entertain any great reverence for the ghostly advice of a *pastor* (they literally deserve the epithet) who perhaps the day before overreached him in a bargain. I would not have you to suppose there are no exceptions to this character, but it would serve most of them. I had been fishing with my uncle, Captain Scott, on the Teviot, and returned through the ground where the Fair is kept. The servant was waiting there with our horses, as we were to ride the water. Lucky it was that it was so; for just about that time the magistrates of Jedburgh, who preside there, began their solemn procession through the Fair. For the greater dignity upon this occasion they had a pair of boots among three men — *i. e.*, as they ride three in a rank, the *outer* legs of those personages who formed the outside, as it may be called, of the procession, were each clothed in a boot. This and several other incongruous appearances were thrown in the teeth of those cavaliers by the Kelso populace, and, by the assistance of whiskey, parties were soon inflamed to a very tight battle, one of that kind which, for distinction sake, is called royal. It was not without great difficulty that we extricated ourselves from the confusion; and had we been on foot, we might have been trampled down by these fierce Jedburghians, who charged like so many troopers. We were spectators of the combat from an eminence, but peace was soon after restored, which made the older warriors regret the effeminacy of the age, as, regularly, it ought to have lasted till night. Two lives were lost, I mean of horses; indeed, had you seen them, you would rather have wondered that they were able to bear their masters to the scene of action, than that they could not carry them off.[1]

I am ashamed to read over this sheet of nonsense, so excuse inaccuracies. Remember me to the lads of the Literary, those of *the club* in particular. I wrote Irving. Remember my most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Clerk and family, particularly James; when you write, let me know how he did when you heard of him. Imitate me in writing a long letter, but not in being long in writing it. Direct to me at Miss Scott's, Garden, Kelso. My letters lie there for me, as it saves their being sent down to Rosebank. The carrier puts up at the Grassmarket, and goes away on Wednesday forenoon. Yours, WALTER SCOTT.

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[1] Mr. Andrew Shortreed (one of a family often mentioned in these *Memoirs*) says, in a letter of November, 1838: "The joke of the *one pair* of boots to *three pair* of legs was so unpalatable to the honest burghers of Jedburgh, that they have suffered the ancient privilege of 'riding the Fair,' as it was called (during which ceremony the inhabitants of Kelso were compelled to shut up their shops as on a holiday), to fall into disuse. Huoy, the runaway forger, a native of Kelso, availed himself of the calumny in a clever squib on the subject: —

'The outside man had each a boot,
The three had but a pair.'"

The next letter is dated from a house at which I have often seen the writer in his latter days. Kippilaw, situated about five or six miles behind Abbotsford, on the high ground between the Tweed and the Water of Ayle, is the seat of an ancient laird of the clan Kerr, but was at this time tenanted by the family of Walter's brother-apprentice, James Ramsay, who afterwards realized a fortune in the civil service of Ceylon.

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ.

KIPPILAW, September 3, 1790.

DEAR CLERK, — I am now writing from the country habitation of our friend Ramsay, where I have been spending a week as pleasantly as ever I spent one in my life. Imagine a commodious old house, pleasantly situated amongst a knot of venerable elms, in a fine sporting, open country, and only two miles from an excellent water for trouts, inhabited by two of the best old ladies (Ramsay's aunts), and three as pleasant young ones (his sisters) as any person could wish to converse with — and you will have some idea of Kippilaw. James and I wander about, fish, or look for hares, the whole day, and at night laugh, chat, and play round games at cards. Such is the fatherland in which I have been living for some days past, and which I leave to-night or to-morrow. This day is very bad; notwithstanding which, James has sallied out to make some calls, as he soon leaves the country. I have a great mind to trouble him with the care of this.

And now for your letter, the receipt of which I have not, I think, yet acknowledged, though I am much obliged to you for it. I dare say you would relish your jaunt to Pennycuik very much, especially considering the solitary desert of Edinburgh, from which it relieved you. By the bye, know, O thou devourer of grapes, who contemnest the vulgar gooseberry, that thou art not singular in thy devouring — *nec tam aversus equos sol* *jungit ab urbe* (*Kelsonianâ scilicet*) — my uncle being the lawful possessor of a vinery measuring no less than twenty-four feet by twelve, the contents of which come often in my way; and, according to the proverb, that enough is as good as a feast, are equally acceptable as if they came out of the most extensive vineyard in France. I cannot, however, equal your boast of breakfasting, dining, and supping on them. As for the civilians[1] — peace be with them, and may the dust lie light upon their heads — they deserve this prayer in return for those sweet slumbers which their benign influence infuses into their readers. I fear I shall too soon be forced to disturb them, for some of our family being now at Kelso, I am under the agonies lest I be obliged to escort them into town. The only pleasure I shall reap by this is that of asking you how you do, and, perhaps, the solid advantage of completing our studies before the College sits down. Employ, therefore, your mornings in slumber while you can, for soon it will be chased from your eyes. I plume myself on my sagacity with regard to C. J. Fox.[2] I always foretold you would tire of him — a vile brute. I have not yet forgot the narrow escape of my fingers. I rejoice at James's[3] intimacy with Miss Menzies. She promised to turn out a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and could James get her, he might sing, "I 'll go no more to sea, to sea." Give my love to him when you write. — "God preserve us, what a scrawl!" says one of the ladies just now, in admiration at the expedition with which I scribble. Well — I was never able in my life to do anything with what is called gravity and deliberation.

I dined two days ago *tête-à-tête* with Lord Buchan. Heard a history of all his ancestors whom he has hung round his chimney-piece. From counting of pedigrees, good Lord deliver us! He is thinking of erecting a monument to Thomson. He frequented Dryburgh much in my grandfather's time. It will be a handsome thing. As to your scamp of a boy, I saw nothing of him; but the face is enough to condemn there. I have seen a man flogged for stealing spirits on the sole information of his nose. Remember me respectfully to your family.

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[1] Books on Civil Law.

[2] A tame fox of Mr. Clerk's, which he soon dismissed.

[3] Mr. James Clerk, R. N.

Believe me yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

After his return from the scene of these merry doings, he writes as follows to his kind uncle. The reader will see that, in the course of the preceding year, he had announced his early views of the origin of what is called the feudal system, in a paper read before the *Literary Society*. He, in the succeeding winter, chose the same subject for an essay, submitted to Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose prelections on ethics he was then attending. Some time later he again illustrated the same opinions more at length in a disquisition before the Speculative Society; and, indeed, he always adhered to them. One of the last historical books he read, before leaving Abbotsford for Malta in 1831, was Colonel Tod's interesting account of Rajasthan; and I well remember the delight he expressed on finding his views confirmed, as they certainly are in a very striking manner, by the philosophical soldier's details of the structure of society in that remote region of the East.

TO CAPTAIN ROBERT SCOTT, ROSEBANK, KELSO.

EDINBURGH, September 30, 1790.

DEAR UNCLE, — We arrived here without any accident about five o'clock on Monday evening. The good weather made our journey pleasant. I have been attending to your commissions here, and find that the last volume of Dodsley's Annual Register published is that for 1787, which I was about to send you; but the bookseller

I frequent had not one in boards, though he expects to procure one for me. There is a new work of the same title and size, on the same plan, which, being published every year regularly, has almost cut out Dodsley's, so that this last is expected to stop altogether. You will let me know if you would wish to have the new work, which is a good one, will join very well with those volumes of Dodsley's which you already have, and is published up to the present year. Byron's Narrative is not yet published, but you shall have it whenever it comes out.

Agreeable to your permission, I send you the scroll copy of an essay on the origin of the feudal system, written for the Literary Society last year. As you are kind enough to interest yourself in my style and manner of writing, I thought you might like better to see it in its original state, than one on the polishing of which more time had been bestowed. You will see that the intention and attempt of the essay is principally to controvert two propositions laid down by the writers on the subject: — 1st, That the system was invented by the Lombards; and, 2dly, that its foundation depended on the king's being acknowledged the sole lord of all the lands in the country, which he afterwards distributed to be held by military tenures. I have endeavored to assign it a more general origin, and to prove that it proceeds upon principles common to all nations when placed in a certain situation. I am afraid the matter will but poorly reward the trouble you will find in reading some parts. I hope, however, you will make out enough to enable you to favor me with your sentiments upon its faults. There is none whose advice I prize so high, for there is none in whose judgment I can so much confide, or who has shown me so much kindness.

I also send, as amusement for an idle half hour, a copy of the regulations of our Society, some of which will, I think, be favored with your approbation.

My mother and sister join in compliments to aunt and you, and also in thanks for the attentions and hospitality which they experienced at Rosebank. And I am ever your affectionate nephew,

WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. — If you continue to want a mastiff, I think I can procure you one of a good breed, and send him by the carrier.

While attending Mr. Dugald Stewart's class, in the winter of 1790–91, Scott produced, in compliance with the usual custom of ethical students, several essays besides that to which I have already made an allusion, and which was, I believe, entitled, On the Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations. But this essay it was that first attracted, in any particular manner, his Professor's attention. Mr. Robert Ainslie,[1] well known as the friend and fellow-traveller of Burns, happened to attend Stewart the same session, and remembers his saying, *ex cathedra*, "The author of this paper shows much knowledge of his subject, and a great taste for such researches." Scott became, before the close of the session, a frequent visitor in Mr. Stewart's family, and an affectionate intercourse was maintained between them through their after-lives.

Let me here set down a little story which most of his friends must have heard him tell of the same period. While attending Dugald Stewart's lectures on moral philosophy, Scott happened to sit frequently beside a modest and diligent youth, considerably his senior, and obviously of very humble condition. Their acquaintance soon became rather intimate, and he occasionally made this new friend the companion of his country walks, but as to his parentage and place of residence he always preserved total silence. One day towards the end of the session, as Scott was returning to Edinburgh from a solitary ramble, his eye was arrested by a singularly venerable *Bluegown*, a beggar of the Edie Ochiltree order, who stood propped on his stick, with his hat in his hand, but silent and motionless, at one of the outskirts of the city. Scott gave the old man what trifle he had in his pocket, and passed on his way. Two or three times afterwards the same thing happened, and he had begun to consider the Bluegown as one who had established a claim on his bounty: when one day he fell in with him as he was walking with his humble student. Observing some confusion in his companion's manner as he saluted his pensioner, and bestowed the usual benefaction, he could not help saying, after they had proceeded a few yards further, "Do you know anything to the old man's discredit?" Upon which the youth burst into tears, and cried, "Oh no, sir, God forbid! — but I am a poor wretch to be ashamed to speak to him — he is my own father. He has enough laid by to serve for his own old days, but he stands bleaching his head in the wind, that he may get the means of paying for my education." Compassionating the young man's situation, Scott soothed his weakness, and kept his secret, but by no means broke off the acquaintance. Some months had elapsed before he again met the Bluegown — it was in a retired place, and the old man begged to speak a word with him. "I find, sir," he said, "that you have been very kind to my Willie. He had often spoke of it before I saw you together. Will you pardon such a liberty, and give me the honor and pleasure of seeing you under my poor roof? To-morrow is Saturday; will you come at two o'clock? Willie has not been very well, and it would do him meikle good to see your face." His curiosity, besides better feelings, was touched, and he accepted this strange invitation. The appointed hour found him within sight of a sequestered little cottage, near St. Leonard's — the hamlet where he has placed the residence of his David Deans. His fellow-student, pale and emaciated from recent sickness, was seated on a stone bench by the door, looking out for his coming, and introduced him into a not untidy cabin, where the old man, divested of his professional garb, was directing the last vibrations of a leg of mutton that hung by a hempen cord before the fire. The mutton was excellent — so were the potatoes and whiskey; and Scott returned home from an entertaining conversation, in which, besides telling many queer stories of his own life — and he had seen service in his youth — the old man more than once used an expression, which was long afterwards put into the mouth of Dominie Sampson's mother: — "Please God, I may live to see my bairn wag his head in a pulpit yet."

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[1] Mr. Ainslie died at Edinburgh, 11th April, 1838, in his 73d year.

Walter could not help telling all this the same night to his mother, and added, that he would fain see his poor friend obtain a tutor's place in some gentleman's family. "Dinna speak to your father about it," said the good lady; "if it had been *a shoulder* he might have thought less, but he will say *the jigot* was a sin. I 'll see what I can do." Mrs. Scott made her inquiries in her own way among the Professors, and having satisfied herself as to the young man's character, applied to her favorite minister, Dr. Erskine, whose influence soon procured such a situation as had been suggested for him, in the north of Scotland. "And thenceforth," said Sir Walter, "I lost sight of my friend — but let us hope he made out his *curriculum* at Aberdeen, and is now wagging his head where the fine old carle wished to see him."[1]

On the 4th January, 1791, Scott was admitted a member of *The Speculative Society*, where it had, long before, been the custom of those about to be called to the

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[1] The reader will find a story not unlike this in the Introduction to *The Antiquary*, 1830. When I first read that note, I asked him why he had altered so many circumstances from the usual oral edition of his anecdote. "Nay," said he, "both stories may be true, and why should I be always lugging in myself, when what happened to another of our class would serve equally well for the purpose I had in view?" I regretted the *leg of mutton.*

Bar, and those who after assuming the gown were left in possession of leisure by the solicitors, to train or exercise themselves in the arts of elocution and debate. From time to time each member produces an essay, and his treatment of his subject is then discussed by the conclave. Scott's essays were, for November, 1791, On the Origin of the Feudal System; for the 14th February, 1792, On the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems; and on the 11th December of the same year, he read one, On the Origin of the Scandinavian Mythology. The selection of these subjects shows the course of his private studies and predilections; but he appears, from the minutes, to have taken his fair share in the ordinary debates of the Society, — and spoke, in the spring of 1791, on these questions, which all belong to the established text-book for juvenile speculation in Edinburgh: — "Ought any permanent support to be provided for the poor?" "Ought there to be an established religion?" "Is attainder and corruption of blood ever a proper punishment?" "Ought the public expenses to be defrayed by levying the amount directly upon the people, or is it expedient to contract national debt for that purpose?" "Was the execution of Charles I. justifiable?" "Should the slave-trade be abolished?" In the next session, previous to his call to the Bar, he spoke in the debates of which these were the theses: — "Has the belief in a future state been of advantage to mankind, or is it ever likely to be so?" "Is it for the interest of Britain to maintain what is called the balance of Europe?" and again on the eternal question as to the fate of King Charles I., which, by the way, was thus set up for re-discussion on a motion by Walter Scott.

He took, for several winters, an ardent interest in this society. Very soon after his admission (18th January, 1791), he was elected their librarian; and in the November following he became also their secretary and treasurer; all which appointments indicate the reliance placed on his careful habits of business, the fruit of his chamber education. The minutes kept in his handwriting attest the strict regularity of his attention to the small affairs, literary and financial, of the club; but they show also, as do all his early letters, a strange carelessness in spelling. His constant good temper softened the asperities of debate; while his multifarious lore, and the quaint humor with which he enlivened its display, made him more a favorite as a speaker than some whose powers of rhetoric were far above his.

Lord Jeffrey remembers being struck, the first night he spent at the Speculative, with the singular appearance of the secretary, who sat gravely at the bottom of the table in a huge woollen nightcap; and when the president took the chair, pleaded a bad toothache as his apology for coming into that worshipful assembly in such a "portentous machine." He read that night an essay on ballads, which so much interested the new member that he requested to be introduced to him. Mr. Jeffrey called on him next evening, and found him "in a small den, on the sunk floor of his father's house in George's Square, surrounded with dingy books," from which they adjourned to a tavern, and supped together. Such was the commencement of an acquaintance, which by degrees ripened into friendship, between the two most distinguished men of letters whom Edinburgh produced in their time. I may add here the description of that early *den*, with which I am favored by a lady of Scott's family:— "Walter had soon begun to collect out-of-the-way things of all sorts. He had more books than shelves; a small painted cabinet, with Scotch and Roman coins in it, and so forth. A claymore and Lochaber axe, given him by old Invernahyle, mounted guard on a little print of Prince Charlie; and *Broughton's Saucer* was hooked up against the wall below it." Such was the germ of the magnificent library and museum of Abbotsford; and such were the "new realms" in which he, on taking posses-

SCOTT'S FATHER'S HOUSE, 25 GEORGE'S SQUARE, EDINBURGH

[illegible]

[illegible] on a little point of [illegible] Such was the [illegible] of Abbotsford [illegible]

sion, had arranged his little paraphernalia about him "with all the feelings of novelty and liberty." Since those days, the habits of life in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, have undergone many changes: and the "convenient parlor," in which Scott first showed Jeffrey his collections of minstrelsy, is now, in all probability, thought hardly good enough for a menial's sleeping-room.

But I have forgotten to explain *Broughton's Saucer*. We read of Mr. Saunders Fairford, that though "an elder of the kirk, and of course zealous for King George and the Government," yet, having "many clients and connections of business among families of opposite political tenets, he was particularly cautious to use all the conventional phrases which the civility of the time had devised as an admissible mode of language betwixt the two parties: Thus he spoke sometimes of the Chevalier, but never either of the *Prince*, which would have been sacrificing his own principles, or of *the Pretender*, which would have been offensive to those of others: Again, he usually designated the Rebellion as the *affair* of 1745, and spoke of any one engaged in it as a person who had been *out* at a certain period — so that, on the whole, he was much liked and respected on all sides."[1] All this was true of Mr. Walter Scott, W. S.; but I have often heard his son tell an anecdote of him, which he dwelt on with particular satisfaction, as illustrative of the man, and of the difficult time through which he had lived.

Mrs. Scott's curiosity was strongly excited one autumn by the regular appearance, at a certain hour every evening, of a sedan chair, to deposit a person carefully muffled up in a mantle, who was immediately ushered into her husband's private room, and commonly remained with him there until long after the usual bedtime of this orderly family. Mr. Scott answered her repeated inquiries with a vagueness which irritated the lady's feelings more and more; until, at last, she could bear the thing no longer; but one evening, just as she heard the bell ring as for the stranger's chair to carry him off, she made her appearance within the forbidden parlor with a salver in her hand, observing that she thought the gentlemen had sat so long, they would be the better of a dish of tea, and had ventured accordingly to bring some for their acceptance. The stranger, a person of distinguished appearance, and richly dressed, bowed to the lady, and accepted a cup; but her husband knit his brows, and refused very coldly to partake the refreshment. A moment afterwards the visitor withdrew — and Mr. Scott, lifting up the window-sash, took the cup which he had left empty on the table, and tossed it out upon the pavement. The lady exclaimed for her china, but was put to silence by her husband's saying, "I can forgive your little curiosity, madam, but you must pay the penalty. I may admit into my house, on a piece of business, persons wholly unworthy to be treated as guests by my wife. Neither lip of me nor of mine comes after Mr. Murray of Broughton's."

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[1] *Redgauntlet*, chap. i.

This was the unhappy man who, after attending Prince Charles Stuart as his secretary throughout the greater part of his expedition, condescended to redeem his own life and fortune by bearing evidence against the noblest of his late master's adherents, when

> "Pitied by gentle hearts Kilmarnock died —
> The brave, Balmerino, were on thy side."

When confronted with Sir John Douglas of Kelhead (ancestor of the Marquess of Queensberry), before the Privy Council in St. James's, the prisoner was asked, "Do you know this witness?" "Not I," answered Douglas; "I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton — but that was a gentleman and a man of honor, and one that could hold up his head!"

The saucer belonging to Broughton's teacup had been preserved; and Walter, at a very early period, made prize of it. One can fancy young Alan Fairford pointing significantly to the relic, when Mr. Saunders was vouchsafing him one of his customary lectures about listening with unseemly sympathy to "the blawing, bleezing stories which the Hieland gentlemen told of those troublous times."[1]

The following letter is the only one of the autumn of 1791 that has reached my hands. It must be read with particular interest for its account of Scott's first visit to Flodden field, destined to be celebrated seventeen years afterwards in the very noblest specimen of his numbers: —

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ., PRINCE'S STREET, EDINBURGH.

NORTHUMBERLAND, 26th August, 1791.

DEAR CLERK, — Behold a letter from the mountains; for I am very snugly settled here, in a farmer's house, about six miles from Wooler, in the very centre of the Cheviot hills, in one of the wildest and most romantic situations which your imagination, fertile upon the subject of cottages, ever suggested. And what the deuce are you about there? methinks I hear you say. Why, sir, of all things in the world — drinking goat's whey — not that I stand in the least need of it, but my uncle having a slight cold, and being a little tired of home, asked me last Sunday evening if I would like to go with him to Wooler, and I answering in the affirmative, next morning's sun beheld us on our journey, through a pass in the Cheviots, upon the back of two special nags, and man Thomas behind with a portmanteau, and two fishing-rods fastened across his back, much in the style of St. Andrew's Cross. Upon reaching Wooler we found the accommodations so bad that we were forced to use some interest to get lodgings here, where we are most delightfully appointed indeed. To add to my satisfaction, we are amidst places renowned by the feats of former days;

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[1] *Redgauntlet*, letter ix.

each hill is crowned with a tower, or camp, or cairn, and in no situation can you be near more fields of battle: Flodden, Otterburn, Chevy Chase, Ford Castle, Chillingham Castle, Copland Castle, and many another scene of blood, are within the compass of a forenoon's ride. Out of the brooks, with which these hills are intersected, we pull trouts of half a yard in length, as fast as we did the perches from the pond at Pennycuik, and we are in the very country of muirfowl.

Often as I have wished for your company, I never did it more earnestly than when I rode over Flodden Edge. I know your taste for these things, and could have undertaken to demonstrate that never was an affair more completely bungled than that day's work was. Suppose one army posted upon the face of a hill, and secured by high grounds projecting on each flank, with the river Till in front, a deep and still river, winding through a very extensive valley called Milfield Plain, and the only passage over it by a narrow bridge, which the Scots artillery, from the hill, could in a moment have demolished. Add, that the English must have hazarded a battle while their troops, which were tumultuously levied, remained together; and that the Scots, behind whom the country was open to Scotland, had nothing to do but to wait for the attack as they were posted. Yet did two thirds of the army, actuated by the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, rush down and give an opportunity to Stanley to occupy the ground they had quitted, by coming over the shoulder of the hill, while the other third, under Lord Home, kept their ground, and having seen their king and about 10,000 of their countrymen cut to pieces, retired into Scotland without loss. For the reason of the bridge not being destroyed while the English passed, I refer you to Pitscottie, who narrates at large, and to whom I give credit for a most accurate and clear description, agreeing perfectly with the ground.

My uncle drinks the whey here, as I do ever since I understood it was brought to his bedside every morning at six, by a very pretty dairy-maid. So much for my residence: all the day we shoot, fish, walk, and ride; dine and sup upon fish struggling from the stream, and the most delicious heath-fed mutton, barn-door fowls, poys,[1] milk-cheese, etc., all in perfection; and so much simplicity resides among these hills, that a pen, which could write at least, was not to be found about the house, though belonging to a considerable farmer, till I shot the crow with whose quill I write this epistle. I wrote to Irving before leaving Kelso. Poor fellow, I am sure his sister's death must have hurt him much; though he makes no noise about feelings, yet still streams always run deepest. I sent a message by him to Edie,[2] poor devil, adding my mite of consolation to him in his affliction. I pity poor * * * * * *, who is more deserving of compassion, being his first offence. Write soon, and as long as the last; you will have Perthshire news, I suppose, soon. Jamie's adventure diverted me much. I read it to my uncle, who being long in the India service, was affronted. Remember me to James when you write, and to all your family, and friends in general. I send this to Kelso — you may address as usual; my letters will be forwarded — adieu — au revoir,

WALTER SCOTT.

With the exception of this little excursion, Scott appears to have been nailed to Edinburgh during this autumn, by that course of legal study, in company with Clerk, on which he dwells in his Memoir with more satisfaction than on any other passage in his early life. He copied out *twice*, as the fragment tells us, his notes of those lectures of the eminent Scots Law professor (Mr. Hume), which he speaks of in such a high strain of eulogy; and Mr. Irving adds that the second copy, being fairly finished and bound into volumes, was presented to his father. The old gentleman was highly gratified with this performance, not only as a satisfactory proof of his son's assiduous attention to the law professor, but inasmuch as the lectures afforded himself "very pleasant reading for leisure hours."

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[1] Pies.

[2] Sir A. Ferguson.

Mr. Clerk assures me that nothing could be more exact (excepting as to a few petty circumstances introduced for obvious reasons) than the resemblance of the Mr. Saunders Fairford of Redgauntlet to his friend's father: — "He was a man of business of the old school, moderate in his charges, economical, and even niggardly in his expenditure; strictly honest in conducting his own affairs and those of his clients; but taught by long experience to be wary and suspicious in observing the motions of others. Punctual as the clock of St. Giles tolled nine" (the hour at which the Court of Session meets), "the dapper form of the hale old gentleman was seen at the threshold of the court hall, or, at farthest, at the head of the Back Stairs" (the most convenient access to the Parliament House from George's Square), "trimly dressed in a complete suit of snuff-colored brown, with stockings of silk or woollen, as suited the weather; a bob wig and a small cocked hat; shoes blacked as Warren would have blacked them; silver shoe-buckles, and a gold stock-buckle. His manners corresponded with his attire, for they were scrupulously civil, and not a little formal. . . . On the whole, he was a man much liked and respected, though his friends would not have been sorry if he had given a dinner more frequently, as his little cellar contained some choice old wine, of which, on such rare occasions, he was no niggard. The whole pleasure of this good old-fashioned man of method, besides that which he really felt in the discharge of his own daily business, was the hope to see his son attain what in the father's eyes was the proudest of all distinctions — the rank and fame of a well-employed lawyer. Every profession has its peculiar honors, and his mind was constructed upon so limited and exclusive a plan, that he valued nothing save the objects of ambition which his own presented. He would have shuddered at his son's acquiring the renown of a hero, and laughed with scorn at the equally barren laurels of literature; it was by the path of the law alone that he was desirous to see him rise to eminence; and the probabilities of success or disappointment were the thoughts of his father by day, and his dream by night."[1]

It is easy to imagine the original of this portrait, writing to one of his friends, about the end of June, 1792 — "I have the pleasure to tell you that my son has passed his private Scots Law examinations with good approbation — a great relief to my mind, especially as worthy Mr. Pest[2] told me in my ear, there was no fear of the 'callant,' as he familiarly called him, which gives me great heart. His public trials, which are nothing in comparison, save a mere form, are to take place, by order of the Honorable Dean of Faculty,[3] on Wednesday first, and on Friday he puts on the gown, and gives a bit chack of dinner to his friends and acquaintances, as is the custom. Your company will be wished for there by more than him. — *P. S.* His thesis is on the title, *De periculo et commodo rei venditæ*, and is a very pretty piece of Latinity."[4]

And all things passed in due order, even as they are figured. The real *Darsie* was present at the real Alan Fairford's "bit chack of dinner," and the old Clerk of the Signet was very joyous on the occasion. Scott's *thesis* was, in fact, on the Title of the Pandects, *Concerning the disposal of the dead bodies of Criminals.* It was dedicated, I doubt not by the careful father's advice, to his friend and neighbor in George's Square, the coarsely humorous, but acute and able, and still well-remembered, Macqueen of Braxfield, then Lord Justice-Clerk (or President of the Supreme Criminal Court) of Scotland.[1]

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[1] *Redgauntlet*, chap. i.

[2] It has been suggested that *Pest* is a misprint for *Peat.* There was an elderly practitioner of the latter name, with whom Mr. Fairford must have been well acquainted. — (1839.)

[3] The situation of Dean of Faculty was filled in 1792 by the Honorable Henry Erskine, of witty and benevolent memory.

[4] *Redgauntlet*, letter ix.

I have often heard both *Alan* and *Darsie* laugh over their reminiscences of the important day when they "put on the gown." After the ceremony was completed, and they had mingled for some time with the crowd of barristers in the Outer Court, Scott said to his comrade, mimicking the air and tone of a Highland lass waiting at the Cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest work — "We 've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and de'il a ane has speered our price." Some friendly solicitor, however, gave him a guinea fee before the Court rose; and as they walked down the High Street together, he said to Mr. Clerk, in passing a hosier's shop — "This is a sort of a wedding-day, Willie; I think I must go in and buy me a new nightcap." He did so accordingly; perhaps this was Lord Jeffrey's "portentous machine." His first fee of any consequence, however, was expended on a silver taper-stand for his mother, which the old lady used to point to with great satisfaction, as it stood on her chimney-piece five-and-twenty years afterwards.

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[1] An eminent annotator observes on this passage : — "The praise of Lord Braxfield's capacity and acquirement is perhaps rather too slight. He was a very good lawyer, and a man of extraordinary sagacity, and in quickness and sureness of apprehension resembled Lord Kenyon, as well as in his ready use of his profound knowledge of law." — (1839.)

CHAPTER VII

FIRST EXPEDITION INTO LIDDESDALE. — STUDY OF GERMAN. — POLITICAL TRIALS, ETC. — SPECIMEN OF LAW PAPERS. — BÜRGER'S LENORE TRANSLATED. — DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

1792–1796

Scott was called to the Bar only the day before the closing of the session, and he appears to have almost immediately escaped to the country. On the 2d of August I find his father writing, — "I have sent the copies of your *thesis* as desired;" and on the 15th he addressed to him at Rosebank a letter, in which there is this paragraph, an undoubted autograph of Mr. Saunders Fairford, *anno œtatis* sixty-three: —

"Dear Walter, — . . . I am glad that your expedition to the west proved agreeable. You do well to warn your mother against Ashestiel. Although I said little, yet I never thought that road could be agreeable; besides, it is taking too wide a circle. Lord Justice-Clerk is in town attending the Bills.[1] He called here yesterday, and inquired very particularly for you. I told him where you was, and he expects to see you at Jedburgh upon the 21st. He is to be at Mellerstain[2] on the 20th, and will be there all night. His Lordship said, in a very pleasant manner, that something might cast up at Jedburgh to give you an opportunity of appearing, and that he would insist upon it, and that in future he meant to give you a share of the criminal business in this Court, — all which is very kind. I told his Lordship that I had dissuaded you from appearing at Jedburgh, but he said I was wrong in doing so, and I therefore leave the matter to you and him. *I think it is probable he will breakfast with Sir H. H. MacDougall on the 21st, on his way to Jedburgh.*" . . .

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[1] The Judges then attended in Edinburgh in rotation during the intervals of term, to take care of various sorts of business which could not brook delay, bills of injunction, etc.

[2] The beautiful seat of the Baillies of Jerviswood, in Berwickshire, a few miles below Dryburgh.

This last quiet hint, that the young lawyer might as well be at Makerstoun (the seat of a relation) when *His Lordship* breakfasted there, and of course swell the train of His Lordship's little procession into the county town, seems delightfully characteristic. I think I hear Sir Walter himself lecturing *me*, when in the same sort of situation, thirty years afterwards. He declined, as one of the following letters will show, the opportunity of making his first appearance on this occasion at Jedburgh. He was present, indeed, at the Court during the assizes, but "durst not venture." His accounts to William Clerk of his vacation amusements, and more particularly of his second excursion to Northumberland, will, I am sure, interest every reader: —

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ., ADVOCATE, PRINCE'S STREET, EDINBURGH.

ROSEBANK, 10th September, 1792.

DEAR WILLIAM, — Taking the advantage of a very indifferent day, which is likely to float away a good deal of corn, and of my father's leaving this place, who will take charge of this scroll, I sit down to answer your favor. I find you have been, like myself, taking advantage of the good weather to look around you a little, and congratulate you upon the pleasure you must have received from your jaunt with Mr. Russell.[1] I apprehend, though you are silent on the subject, that your conversation was enlivened by many curious disquisitions of the nature of *undulating exhalations*. I should have bowed before the venerable grove of oaks at Hamilton with as much respect as if I had been a Druid about to gather the sacred mistletoe. I should hardly have suspected your host Sir William[1] of having been the occasion of the scandal brought upon the library and Mr. Gibb[2] by the introduction of the Cabinet des Fées, of which I have a volume or two here. I am happy to think there is an admirer of *snug things* in the administration of the library. Poor Linton's[3] misfortune, though I cannot say it surprises, yet heartily grieves me. I have no doubt he will have many advisers and animadverters upon the naughtiness of his ways, whose admonitions will be forgot upon the next opportunity.

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[1] Mr. Russell, surgeon, afterwards Professor of Clinical Surgery at Edinburgh.

I am lounging about the country here, to speak sincerely, as idle as the day is long. Two old companions of mine, brothers of Mr. Walker of Wooden, having come to this country, we have renewed a great intimacy. As they live directly upon the opposite bank of the river, we have signals agreed upon by which we concert a plan of operations for the day. They are both officers, and very intelligent young fellows, and what is of some consequence, have a brace of fine greyhounds. Yesterday forenoon we killed seven hares, so you may see how plenty the game is with us. I have turned a keen duck-shooter, though my success is not very great; and when wading through the mosses upon this errand, accoutred with the long gun, a jacket, mosquito trousers, and a rough cap, I might well pass for one of my redoubted moss-trooper progenitors, Walter Fire-the-Braes,[1] or rather Willie wi' the Bolt-Foot.

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[1] Sir William Miller (Lord Glenlee).

[2] Mr. Gibb was the Librarian of the Faculty of Advocates.

[3] Clerk, Abercromby, Scott, Ferguson, and others, had occasional boating excursions from Leith to Inchcolm, Inchkeith, etc. On one of these their boat was neared by a Newhaven one — Ferguson, at the moment, was standing up talking; one of the Newhaven fishermen, taking him for a brother of his own craft, bawled out, "Linton, you lang bitch, is that you?" From that day Adam Ferguson's cognomen among his friends of *The Club* was Linton.

For about-doors' amusement, I have constructed a seat in a large tree which spreads its branches horizontally over the Tweed. This is a favorite situation of mine for reading, especially in a day like this, when the west wind rocks the branches on which I am perched, and the river rolls its waves below me of a turbid blood color. I have, moreover, cut an embrasure, through which I can fire upon the gulls, herons, and cormorants, as they fly screaming past my nest. To crown the whole, I have carved an inscription upon it in the ancient Roman taste. I believe I shall hardly return into town, barring accidents, sooner than the middle of next month, perhaps not till November. Next week, weather permitting, is destined for a Northumberland expedition, in which I shall visit some parts of that country which I have not yet seen, particularly about Hexham. Some days ago I had nearly met with a worse accident than the tramp I took at Moorfoot;[2] for having bewildered myself among the Cheviot hills, it was nearly nightfall before I got to the village of Hownam, and the passes with which I was acquainted. You do not speak of being in Perthshire this season, though I suppose you intend it. I suppose we, that is, *nous autres*,[3] are at present completely dispersed.

Compliments to all who are in town, and best respects to your own family, both in Prince's Street and at Eldin. — Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

Walter Scott.

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[1] Walter Scott of Synton (elder brother of *Bolt-Foot*, the first Baron of Harden) was thus designated. He greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Melrose, A. D. 1526.

[2] This alludes to being lost in a fishing excursion.

[3] The companions of *The Club*.

TO WILLIAM CLERK, ESQ.

ROSEBANK, 30th September, 1792.

DEAR WILLIAM, — I suppose this will find you flourishing like a green bay-tree on the mountains of Perthshire, and in full enjoyment of all the pleasures of the country. All that I envy you is the *noctes cœnæque deum*, which, I take it for granted, you three merry men will be spending together, while I am poring over Bartholine in the long evenings, solitary enough; for, as for the lobsters, as you call them, I am separated from them by the Tweed, which precludes evening meetings, unless in fine weather and full moons. I have had an expedition through Hexham and the higher parts of Northumberland, which would have delighted the very cockles of your heart, not so much on account of the beautiful romantic appearance of the country, though that would have charmed you also, as because you would have seen more Roman inscriptions built into gate-posts, barns, etc., than perhaps are to be found in any other part of Britain. These have been all dug up from the neighboring Roman wall, which is still in many places very entire, and gives a stupendous idea of the perseverance of its founders, who carried such an erection from sea to sea, over rocks, mountains, rivers, and morasses. There are several lakes among the mountains above Hexham, well worth going many miles to see, though their fame is eclipsed by their neighborhood to those of Cumberland. They are surrounded by old towers and castles, in situations the most savagely romantic; what would I have given to have been able to take effect-pieces from some of them! Upon the Tyne, about Hexham, the country has a different aspect, presenting much of the beautiful, though less of the sublime. I was particularly charmed with the situation of Beaufront, a house belonging to a mad sort of genius, whom, I am sure, I have told you some stories about. He used to call himself the Noble

Errington, but of late has assumed the title of Duke of Hexham. Hard by the town is the field of battle where the forces of Queen Margaret were defeated by those of the House of York, a blow which the Red Rose never recovered during the civil wars. The spot where the Duke of Somerset and the northern nobility of the Lancastrian faction were executed after the battle is still called Dukesfield. The inhabitants of this country speak an odd dialect of the Saxon, approaching nearly that of Chaucer, and have retained some customs peculiar to themselves. They are the descendants of the ancient Danes, chased into the fastnesses of Northumberland by the severity of William the Conqueror. Their ignorance is surprising to a Scotchman. It is common for the traders in cattle, which business is carried on to a great extent, to carry all letters received in course of trade to the parish church, where the clerk reads them aloud after service, and answers them according to circumstances.

We intended to visit the lakes in Cumberland, but our jaunt was cut short by the bad weather. I went to the circuit at Jedburgh, to make my bow to Lord J. Clerk, and might have had employment, but durst not venture. Nine of the Dunse rioters were condemned to banishment, but the ferment continues violent in the Merse. Kelso races afforded little sport — Wishaw[1] lost a horse which cost him £500, and foundered irrecoverably on the course. At another time I shall quote George Buchanan's adage of "a fool and his money," but at present labor under a similar misfortune; my Galloway having yesterday thought proper (N. B., without a rider) to leap over a gate, and being lamed for the present. This is not his first *faux-pas*, for he jumped into a water with me on his back when in Northumberland, to the imminent danger of my life. He is, therefore, to be sold (when recovered), and another purchased. This accident has occasioned you the trouble of reading so long an epistle, the day being Sunday, and my uncle, the captain, busily engaged with your father's naval tactics, is too seriously employed to be an agreeable companion. Apropos (des bottes) — I am sincerely sorry to hear that James is still unemployed, but have no doubt a time will come round when his talents will have an opportunity of being displayed to his advantage. I have no prospect of seeing my *chère adorable* till winter, if then. As for you, I pity you not, seeing as how you have so good a succedaneum in M. G.; and, on the contrary, hope, not only that Edmonstone may *roast* you, but that Cupid may again (as erst) *fry* you on the gridiron of jealousy for your infidelity. Compliments to our right trusty and well-beloved Linton and Jean Jacques.[1] If you write, which, by the way, I hardly have the conscience to expect, direct to my father's care, who will forward your letter. I have quite given up duck-shooting for the season, the birds being too old, and the mosses too deep and cold. I have no reason to boast of my experience or success in the sport, and for my own part, should fire at any distance under eighty or even ninety paces, though above forty-five I would reckon it a *coup désespéré*, and as the bird is beyond measure shy, you may be sure I was not very bloody. Believe me, deferring, *as usual*, our dispute till another opportunity, always sincerely yours,

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[1] William Hamilton of Wishaw, — who afterwards established his claim to the peerage of Belhaven.

WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. — I believe, if my pony does not soon recover, that misfortune, with the bad weather, may send me soon to town.

It was within a few days after Scott's return from his excursion to Hexham, that, while attending the Michaelmas head-court, as an annual county-meeting is called, at Jedburgh, he was introduced, by an old companion, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, to Mr. Robert Shortreed, that gentleman's near relation, who spent the greater part of his life in the enjoyment of much respect as Sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire. Scott had been expressing his wish to visit the then wild and inaccessible district of Liddesdale, particularly with a view to examine the ruins of the famous castle of Hermitage, and to pick up some of the ancient *riding ballads*, said to be still preserved among the descendants of the moss-troopers, who had followed the banner of the Douglases, when lords of that grim and remote fastness. Mr. Shortreed had many connections in Liddesdale, and knew its passes well, and he was pointed out as the very guide the young advocate wanted. They started, accordingly, in a day or two afterwards, from Abbotrule; and the laird meant to have been of the party; but "it was well for him," said Shortreed, "that he changed his mind — for he could never have done as we did."[1]

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[1] John James Edmonstone.

During seven successive years Scott made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale, with Mr. Shortreed for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever been seen in the district — the first, indeed, that ever appeared there was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity — even such

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[1] I am obliged to Mr. John Elliot Shortreed, a son of Scott's early friend, for some *memoranda* of his father's conversations on this subject. These notes were written in 1824; and I shall make several quotations from them. I had, however, many opportunities of hearing Mr. Shortreed's stories from his own lips, having often been under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter, who to the last always was his old friend's guest when business took him to Jedburgh.

"a rowth of auld nicknackets" as Burns ascribes to Captain Grose. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches seems very doubtful. "He was *makin' himsel'* a' the time," said Mr. Shortreed; "but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: at first he thought o' little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun."

"In those days," says the Memorandum before me, "advocates were not so plenty — at least about Liddesdale;" and the worthy Sheriff-substitute goes on to describe the sort of bustle, not unmixed with alarm, produced at the first farmhouse they visited (Willie Elliot's at Millburnholm), when the honest man was informed of the quality of one of his guests. When they dismounted, accordingly, he received Mr. Scott with great ceremony, and insisted upon himself leading his horse to the stable. Shortreed accompanied Willie, however, and the latter, after taking a deliberate peep at Scott, "out-by the edge of the door-cheek," whispered, "Weel, Robin, I say, de'il hae me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he 's just a chield like ourselves, I think." Half-a-dozen dogs of all degrees had already gathered round "the advocate," and his way of returning their compliments had set Willie Elliot at once at his ease.

According to Mr. Shortreed, this goodman of Millburnholm was the great original of Dandie Dinmont. As he seems to have been the first of these upland sheep-farmers that Scott ever visited, there can be little doubt that he sat for some parts of that inimitable portraiture; and it is certain that the James Davidson, who carried the name of Dandie to his grave with him, and whose thoroughbred deathbed scene is told in the Notes to Guy

Mannering, was first pointed out to Scott by Mr. Shortreed himself, several years after the novel had established the man's celebrity all over the Border; some accidental report about his terriers, and their odd names, having alone been turned to account in the original composition of the tale. But I have the best reason to believe that the kind and manly character of Dandie, the gentle and delicious one of his wife, and some at least of the most picturesque peculiarities of the *ménage* at Charlieshope, were filled up from Scott's observation, years after this period, of a family, with one of whose members he had, through the best part of his life, a close and affectionate connection. To those who were familiar with him, I have perhaps already sufficiently indicated the early home of his dear friend, William Laidlaw, among "the braes of Yarrow."

They dined at Millburnholm, and after having lingered over Willie Elliot's punch-bowl, until, in Mr. Shortreed's phrase, they were "half-glowrin," mounted their steeds again, and proceeded to Dr. Elliot's at Cleughhead, where ("for," says my Memorandum, "folk were na very nice in those days") the two travellers slept in one and the same bed — as, indeed, seems to have been the case with them throughout most of their excursions in this primitive district. This Dr. Elliot had already a large MS. collection of the ballads Scott was in quest of; and finding how much his guest admired his acquisitions, thenceforth exerted himself, for several years, with redoubled diligence, in seeking out the living depositaries of such lore among the darker recesses of the mountains. "The Doctor," says Mr. Shortreed, "would have gane through fire and water for Sir Walter, when he ance kenned him."

Next morning they seem to have ridden a long way, for the express purpose of visiting one "auld Thomas o' Twizzlehope," another Elliot, I suppose, who was celebrated for his skill on the Border pipe, and in particular for being in possession of the real *lilt* of *Dick o' the Cow.* Before starting, that is, at six o'clock, the ballad-hunters had, "just to lay the stomach, a devilled duck or twae, and some *London* porter." Auld Thomas found them, nevertheless, well disposed for "breakfast" on their arrival at Twizzlehope; and this being over, he delighted them with one of the most hideous and unearthly of all the specimens of "riding music," and, moreover, with considerable libations of whiskey-punch, manufactured in a certain wooden vessel, resembling a very small milk-pail, which he called "Wisdom," because it "made" only a few spoonfuls of spirits — though he had the art of replenishing it so adroitly, that it had been celebrated for fifty years as more fatal to sobriety than any bowl in the parish. Having done due honor to "Wisdom," they again mounted, and proceeded over moss and moor to some other equally hospitable master of the pipe. "Eh me," says Shortreed, "sic an endless fund o' humor and drollery as he then had wi' him! Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawlie he suited himsel' to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsel' the great man, or took ony airs in the company. I 've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk — (this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was but rare) — but, drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman. He looked excessively heavy and stupid when he was *fou*, but he was never out o' gude-humor."

On reaching, one evening, some *Charlieshope* or other (I forget the name) among those wildernesses, they found a kindly reception as usual; but to their agreeable surprise, after some days of hard living, a measured and orderly hospitality as respected liquor. Soon after supper, at which a bottle of elderberry wine alone had been produced, a young student of divinity, who happened to be in the house, was called upon to take the "big ha'

Bible," in the good old fashion of Burns's Saturday Night; and some progress had been already made in the service, when the goodman of the farm, whose "tendency," as Mr. Mitchell says, "was soporific," scandalized his wife and the dominie by starting suddenly from his knees, and rubbing his eyes, with a stentorian exclamation of "By ——, here 's the keg at last!" and in tumbled, as he spake the word, a couple of sturdy herdsmen, whom, on hearing a day before of the advocate's approaching visit, he had despatched to a certain smuggler's haunt, at some considerable distance, in quest of a supply of *run* brandy from the Solway Frith. The pious "exercise" of the household was hopelessly interrupted. With a thousand apologies for his hitherto shabby entertainment, this jolly Elliot, or Armstrong, had the welcome *keg* mounted on the table without a moment's delay, and gentle and simple, not forgetting the dominie, continued carousing about it until daylight streamed in upon the party. Sir Walter Scott seldom failed, when I saw him in company with his Liddesdale companion, to mimic with infinite humor the sudden outburst of his old host, on hearing the clatter of horses' feet, which he knew to indicate the arrival of the keg — the consternation of the dame — and the rueful despair with which the young clergyman closed the book.

"It was in that same season, I think," says Mr. Shortreed, "that Sir Walter got from Dr. Elliot the large old border war-horn, which ye may still see hanging in the armory at Abbotsford. How *great* he was when he was made master o' *that!* I believe it had been found in Hermitage Castle — and one of the Doctor's servants had used it many a day as a grease-horn for his scythe, before they discovered its history. When cleaned out, it was never a hair the worse — the original chain, hoop, and mouth-piece of steel, were all entire, just as you now see them. Sir Walter carried it home all the way from Liddesdale to Jedburgh, slung about his neck like Johnny Gilpin's bottle, while I was entrusted with an ancient bridle-bit, which we had likewise picked up.

> ‘The feint o’ pride — na pride had he . . .
> A lang kail-gully hung down by his side,
> And a great meikle nowt-horn to rout on had he,’

and meikle and sair we routed on ’t, and ‘hotched and blew, wi’ micht and main.’ O what pleasant days! And then a’ the nonsense we had cost us naething. We never put hand in pocket for a week on end. Toll-bars there were none — and indeed I think our haill charges were a feed o’ corn to our horses in the gangin’ and comin’ at Riccartoun mill.”

It is a pity that we have no letters of Scott’s describing this first *raid* into Liddesdale; but as he must have left Kelso for Edinburgh very soon after its conclusion, he probably chose to be the bearer of his own tidings. At any rate, the wonder perhaps is, not that we should have so few letters of this period, as that any have been recovered. “I ascribe the preservation of my little handful,” says Mr. Clerk, “to a sort of instinctive prophetic sense of his future greatness.”

I have found, however, two note-books, inscribed “Walter Scott, 1792,” containing a variety of scraps and hints which may help us to fill up our notion of his private studies during that year. He appears to have used them indiscriminately. We have now an extract from the author he happened to be reading; now a memorandum of something that had struck him in conversation; a fragment of an essay; transcripts of favorite poems; remarks on curious cases in the old records of the Justiciary Court; in short, a most miscellaneous collection, in which there is whatever might have been looked for, with perhaps the single exception of original verse. One of the books opens with: “*Vegtam’s Kvitha*, or The Descent of Odin, with the Latin of Thomas Bartholine, and the English poetical version of Mr. Gray; with some account of the death of Balder, both as narrated in the Edda, and as handed down to us by the Northern historians — *Auctore Gualtero Scott.*” The Norse original and the two versions are then transcribed; and the historical account appended, extending to seven closely written quarto pages, was, I doubt not, read before one or other of his debating societies. Next comes a page, headed "Pecuniary Distress of Charles the First," and containing a transcript of a receipt for some plate lent to the King in 1643. He then copies Langhorne's Owen of Carron; the verses of Canute, on passing Ely; the lines to a cuckoo, given by Warton as the oldest specimen of English verse; a translation "by a gentleman in Devonshire," of the death-song of Regner Lodbrog; and the beautiful quatrain omitted in Gray's Elegy, —

> "There scattered oft, the earliest of the year," etc.

After this we have an Italian canzonet, on the praises of blue eyes (which were much in favor at this time); several pages of etymologies from Ducange; some more of notes on the Morte Arthur; extracts from the books of Adjournal, about Dame Janet Beaton, the Lady of Branksome of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, and her husband, "Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, called *Wicked Wat;*" other extracts about witches and fairies; various couplets from Hall's Satires; a passage from Albania; notes on the Second Sight, with extracts from Aubrey and Glanville; a "List of Ballads to be discovered or recovered;" extracts from Guerin de Montglave; and after many more similar entries, a table of the Mæso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon and Runic alphabets — with a fourth section, headed *German*, but left blank. But enough perhaps of this record.

In November, 1792, Scott and Clerk began their regular attendance at the Parliament House, and Scott, to use Mr. Clerk's words, "by and by crept into a tolerable share of such business as may be expected from a writer's connection." By this we are to understand that he was employed from time to time by his father, and probably a few other solicitors, in that dreary every-day taskwork, chiefly of long written *informations*, and other papers for the Court, on which young counsellors of the Scotch Bar were then expected to bestow a great deal of trouble for very scanty pecuniary remuneration, and with scarcely a chance of finding reserved for their hands any matter that could elicit the display of superior knowledge of understanding. He had also his part in the cases of persons suing *in forma pauperis;* but how little important those that came to his share were, and how slender was the impression they had left on his mind, we may gather from a note on Redgauntlet, wherein he signifies his doubts whether he really had ever been engaged in what he has certainly made the *cause célèbre* of *Poor Peter Peebles.*

But he soon became as famous for his powers of storytelling among the lawyers of the Outer-House, as he had been among the companions of his High School days. The place where these idlers mostly congregated was called, it seems, by a name which sufficiently marks the date — it was *the Mountain.* Here, as Roger North says of the Court of King's Bench in his early day, "there was more news than law;" — here hour after hour passed away, week after week, month after month, and year after year, in the interchange of light-hearted merriment among a circle of young men, more than one of whom, in after-times, attained the highest honors of the profession. Among the most intimate of Scott's daily associates from this time, and during all his subsequent attendance at the Bar, were, besides various since-eminent persons that have been already named, the first legal antiquary of our time in Scotland, Mr. Thomas Thomson, and William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder. Mr. Clerk remembers complaining one morning on finding the group convulsed with laughter, that *Duns Scotus* had been forestalling him in a good story, which he had communicated privately the day before — adding, moreover, that his friend had not only stolen, but disguised it. "Why," answered he, skilfully waiving the main charge, "this is always the way with *the Baronet*. He is continually saying that I change his stories, whereas in fact I only put a cocked hat on their heads, and stick a cane into their hands — to make them fit for going into company."

The German class, of which we have an account in one of the Prefaces of 1830, was formed before the Christmas of 1792, and it included almost all these loungers of *the Mountain*. In the essay now referred to Scott traces the interest excited in Scotland on the subject of German literature to a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, on the 21st of April, 1788, by the author of The Man of Feeling. "The literary persons of Edinburgh," he says, "were then first made aware of the existence of works of genius in a language cognate with the English, and possessed of the same manly force of expression; they learned at the same time that the taste which dictated the German compositions was of a kind as nearly allied to the English as their language: those who were from their youth accustomed to admire Shakespeare and Milton, became acquainted for the first time with a race of poets, who had the same lofty ambition to spurn the flaming boundaries of the universe, and investigate the realms of Chaos and Old Night; and of dramatists, who, disclaiming the pedantry of the unities, sought, at the expense of occasional improbabilities and extravagance, to present life on the stage in its scenes of wildest contrast, and in all its boundless variety of character. . . . Their fictitious narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature, which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began also to occupy the attention of the British literati. In Edinburgh, where the remarkable coincidence between the German language and the Lowland Scottish encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered spring of literature, a class was formed of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of being much together, and the time they spent in this new study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, averse to the necessary toil of grammar, and the rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and of course frequently committed blunders which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions." The teacher, Dr. Willich, a medical man, is then described as striving with little success to make his pupils sympathize in his own passion for the "sickly monotony" and "affected ecstasies" of Gessner's Death of Abel; and the young students, having at length acquired enough of the language for their respective purposes, as selecting for their private pursuits, some the philosophical treatises of Kant, others the dramas of Schiller and Goethe. The chief, if not the only *Kantist* of the party, was, I believe, John Macfarlan of Kirkton; among those who turned zealously to the popular belles-lettres of Germany were, with Scott, his most intimate friends of the period, William Clerk, William Erskine, and Thomas Thomson.

These studies were much encouraged by the example, and assisted by the advice, of an accomplished person, considerably Scott's superior in standing, Alexander Fraser Tytler, afterwards a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Woodhouselee. His version of Schiller's Robbers was one of the earliest from the German theatre, and no doubt stimulated his young friend to his first experiments in the same walk.

The contemporary familiars of those days almost all survive; but one, and afterwards the most intimate of them all, went before him; and I may therefore hazard in this place a few words on the influence which he exercised at this critical period on Scott's literary tastes and studies. William Erskine was the son of an Episcopalian clergyman in Perthshire, of a good family, but far from wealthy. He had received his early education at Glasgow, where, while attending the college lectures, he was boarded under the roof of Andrew Macdonald, the author of Vimonda, who then officiated as minister to a small congregation of Episcopalian nonconformists. From this unfortunate but very ingenious man, Erskine had derived, in boyhood, a strong passion for old English literature, more especially the Elizabethan dramatists; which, however, he combined with a far livelier relish for the classics of antiquity than either Scott or his master ever possessed. From the beginning, accordingly, Scott had in Erskine a monitor who — entering most warmly into his taste for national lore — the life of the past — and the bold and picturesque style of the original English school — was constantly urging the advantages to be derived from combining with its varied and masculine breadth of delineation such attention to the minor graces of arrangement and diction as might conciliate the fastidiousness of modern taste. Deferring what I may have to say as to Erskine's general character and manners, until I shall have approached the period when I myself had the pleasure of sharing his acquaintance, I introduce the general bearing of his literary opinions thus early, because I conceive there is no doubt that his companionship was, even in those days, highly serviceable to Scott as a student of the German drama and romance. Directed, as he mainly was in the ultimate determination of his literary ambition, by the example of their great founders, he appears to have run at first no trivial hazard of adopting the extravagances, both of thought and language, which he found blended in their works with such a captivating display of genius, and genius employed on subjects so much in unison with the deepest of his own juvenile predilections. His friendly critic was just, as well as delicate; and unmerciful severity as to the mingled absurdities and vulgarities of German detail commanded deliberate attention from one who admired not less enthusiastically than himself the genuine sublimity and pathos of his new favorites. I could, I believe, name one other at least among Scott's fellow-students of the same time, whose influence was combined in this matter with Erskine's; but his was that which continued to be exerted the longest, and always in the same direction. That it was not accompanied with entire success, the readers of The Doom of Devorgoil, to say nothing of minor blemishes in far better works, must acknowledge.

These German studies divided Scott's attention with the business of the courts of law, on which he was at least a regular attendant during the winter of 1792–93.

In March, when the Court rose, he proceeded into Galloway, where he had not before been, in order to make himself acquainted with the persons and localities mixed up with the case of a certain Rev. Mr. M'Naught, minister of Girthon, whose trial, on charges of habitual drunkenness, singing of lewd and profane songs, dancing and toying at a penny-wedding with a "sweetie wife" (that is, an itinerant vender of gingerbread, etc.), and moreover of promoting irregular marriages as a justice of the peace, was about to take place before the General Assembly of the Kirk.

As his "Case for M'Naught," dated May, 1793, is the first of his legal papers that I have discovered, and contains several characteristic enough turns, I make no apology for introducing a few extracts:—

> At the head of the first class of offences stands the extraordinary assertion, that, being a Minister of the Gospel, the respondent had illegally undertaken the office of a justice of peace. It is, the respondent believes, the first time that ever the undertaking an office of such extensive utility was stated as a crime; for he humbly apprehends, that by conferring the office of a justice of the peace upon clergymen, their influence may, in the general case, be rendered more extensive among their parish-

ioners, and many trifling causes be settled by them, which might lead the litigants to enormous expenses, and become the subject of much contention before other courts. The duty being only occasional, and not daily, cannot be said to interfere with those of their function; and their education, and presumed character, render them most proper for the office. It is indeed alleged that the Act 1584, chap. 133, excludes clergymen from acting under a commission of the peace. This Act, however, was passed at a time when it was of the highest importance to the Crown to wrench from the hands of the clergy the power of administering justice in civil cases, which had, from the ignorance of the laity, been enjoyed by them almost exclusively. During the whole reign of James VI., as is well known to the Reverend Court, such a jealousy subsisted betwixt the Church and the State, that those who were at the head of the latter endeavored, by every means in their power, to diminish the influence of the former. At present, when these dissensions happily no longer subsist, the law, as far as regards the office of justice of the peace, appears to have fallen into disuse, and the respondent conceives that any minister is capable of acting in that, or any other judicial capacity, provided it is of such a nature as not to withdraw much of his time from what the statute calls the comfort and edification of the flock committed to him. Further, the Act 1584 is virtually repealed by the statute 6th Anne, c. 6, sect. 2, which makes the Scots Law on the subject of justices of the peace the same with that of England, where the office is publicly exercised by the clergy of all descriptions.

. . . Another branch of the accusation against the defender as a justice of peace, is the ratification of irregular marriages. The defender must here also call the attention of his reverend brethren and judges to the expediency of his conduct. The girls were usually with child at the time the application was made to the defender. In this situation, the children born out of matrimony, though begot under promise of marriage, must have been thrown upon the parish, or perhaps murdered in infancy, had not the men been persuaded to consent to a solemn declaration of betrothment, or private marriage, emitted before the defender as a justice of peace. The defender himself, commiserating the situation of such women, often endeavored to persuade their seducers to do them justice; and men frequently acquiesced in this sort of marriage, when they could by no means have been prevailed upon to go through the ceremonies of proclamation of banns, or the expense and trouble of a public wedding. The declaration of a previous marriage was sometimes literally true ; sometimes a fiction voluntarily emitted by the parties themselves, under the belief that it was the most safe way of constituting a private marriage *de presenti.* The defender had been induced, from the practice of other justices, to consider the receiving these declarations, whether true or false, as a part of his duty, which he could not decline, even had he been willing to do so. Finally, the defender must remind the Venerable Assembly that he acted upon these occasions as a justice of peace, which brings him back to the point from which he set out, namely, that the Reverend Court are utterly incompetent to take cognizance of his conduct in that character, which no sentence that they can pronounce could give or take away.

The second grand division of the libel against the defender refers to his conduct as a clergyman and a Christian. He was charged in the libel with the most gross and vulgar behavior, with drunkenness, blasphemy, and impiety ; yet all the evidence which the appellants have been able to bring forward tends only to convict him of three acts of drunkenness during the course of fourteen years : for even the Presbytery, severe as they have been, acquit him *quoad ultra.* But the attention of the Reverend Court is earnestly entreated to the situation of the defender at the time, the circumstances which conduced to his imprudence, and the share which some of those had in occasioning his guilt, who have since been most active in persecuting and distressing him on account of it.

The defender must premise, by observing, that the crime of drunkenness consists not in a man's having been in that situation twice or thrice in his life, but in the constant and habitual practice of the vice ; the distinction between *ebrius* and *ebriosus* being founded in common sense, and recognized by law. A thousand cases may be supposed, in which a man, without being aware of what he is about, may be insensibly led on to intoxication, especially in a country where the vice is unfortunately so common, that upon some occasions a man may go to excess from a false sense of modesty, or a fear of disobliging his entertainer. The defender will not deny, that after losing his senses upon the occasions, and in the manner to be afterwards stated, he may have committed improprieties which fill him with sorrow and regret: but he hopes, that in case he shall be able to show circumstances which abridge and palliate the guilt of his imprudent excess, the Venerable Court will consider these improprieties as the effects of that excess only, and not as arising from any radical vice in his temper or disposition. When a man is bereft of his judgment by the influence of wine, and commits any crime, he can only be said to be morally culpable, in proportion to the impropriety of the excess he has committed, and not in proportion to the magnitude of its evil consequences. In a legal view, indeed, a man must be held as answerable and punishable for such a crime, precisely as if he had been in a state of sobriety; but his crime is, in a moral light, comprised in the *origo mali*, the drunkenness only. His senses being once gone, he is no more than a human machine, as insensible of misconduct, in speech and action, as a parrot or an automaton. This is more particularly the case with respect to indecorums, such as the defender is accused of; for a man can no more be held a common swearer, or a habitual talker of obscenity, because he has been guilty of using such expressions when intoxicated, than he can be termed an idiot, because, when intoxicated, he has spoken nonsense. If, therefore, the defender can extenuate the guilt of his intoxication, he hopes that its consequences will be numbered rather among his misfortunes than faults; and that his Reverend Brethren will consider him, while in that state, as acting from a mechanical impulse, and as incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. For the scandal which his behavior may have occasioned, he feels the most heartfelt sorrow, and will submit with penitence and contrition to the severe rebuke which the Presbytery have decreed against him. But he cannot think that his unfortunate misdemeanor, circumstanced as he was, merits a severer punishment. He can show that pains were at these times taken to lead him on, when bereft of his senses, to subjects which were likely to call forth improper or indecent expressions. The defender must further urge, that not being originally educated for the church, he may, before he assumed the sacred character, have occasionally permitted himself freedoms of expression which are reckoned less culpable among the laity. Thus he may, during that time, have learned the songs which he is accused of singing, though rather inconsistent with his clerical character. What, then, was more natural, than that, when thrown off his guard by the assumed conviviality and artful solicitations of those about him, former improper habits, though renounced during his thinking moments, might assume the reins of his imagination, when his situation rendered him utterly insensible of their impropriety?

. . . The Venerable Court will now consider how far three instances of ebriety, and their consequences, should ruin at once the character and the peace of mind of the unfortunate defender, and reduce him, at his advanced time of life, about sixty years, together with his aged parent, to a state of beggary. He hopes his severe sufferings may be considered as some atonement for the improprieties of which he may have been guilty; and that the Venerable Court will, in their judgment, remember mercy.

In respect whereof, etc.

WALTER SCOTT.

This argument (for which he received five guineas) was sustained by Scott in a speech of considerable length at the Bar of the Assembly. It was far the most important business in which any solicitor had as yet employed him, and *The Club* mustered strong in the gallery. He began in a low voice, but by degrees gathered more confidence; and when it became necessary for him to analyze the evidence touching a certain penny-wedding, repeated some very coarse specimens of his client's alleged conversation, in a tone so bold and free, that he was called to order with great austerity by one of the leading members of the Venerable Court. This seemed to confuse him not a little; so when, by and by, he had to recite a stanza of one of M'Naught's convivial ditties, he breathed it out in a faint and hesitating style; whereupon, thinking he needed encouragement, the allies in the gallery astounded the Assembly by cordial shouts of *hear! hear!* — *encore! encore!* They were immediately turned out, and Scott got through the rest of his harangue very little to his own satisfaction.

He believed, in a word, that he had made a complete failure, and issued from the Court in a melancholy mood. At the door he found Adam Ferguson waiting to inform him that the brethren so unceremoniously extruded from the gallery had sought shelter in a neighboring tavern, where they hoped he would join them. He complied with the invitation, but seemed for a long while incapable of enjoying the merriment of his friends. "Come, *Duns*," cried *the Baronet*, — "cheer up, man, and fill another tumbler; here 's * * * * * * going to give us *The Tailor*." — "Ah!" he answered, with a groan, "the tailor was a better man than me, sirs; for he didna venture *ben* until he *kenned the way*." A certain comical old song, which had, perhaps, been a favorite with the minister of Girthon —

> "The tailor he came here to sew,
> And weel he kenn'd the way o't," etc.

was, however, sung and chorused; and the evening ended in the full jollity of *High Jinks*.

Mr. M'Naught was deposed from the ministry, and his young advocate has written out at the end of the printed papers on the case two of the *songs* which had been alleged in the evidence. They are both grossly indecent. It is to be observed, that the research he had made with a view to pleading this man's cause carried him, for the first, and I believe for the last time, into the scenery of his Guy Mannering; and I may add that several of the names of the minor characters of the novel (that of *M'Guffog*, for example) appear in the list of witnesses for and against his client.

If the preceding autumn forms a remarkable point in Scott's history, as first introducing him to the manners of the wilder Border country, the summer which followed left traces of equal importance. He gave the greater part of it to an excursion which much extended his knowledge of Highland scenery and character; and in particular furnished him with the richest stores, which he afterwards turned to account in one of the most beautiful of his great poems, and in several, including the first, of his prose romances.

Accompanied by Adam Ferguson, he visited on this occasion some of the finest districts of Stirlingshire and Perthshire; and not in the percursory manner of his more boyish expeditions, but taking up his residence for a week or ten days in succession at the family residences of several of his young allies of *the Mountain*, and from thence familiarizing himself at leisure with the country and the people round about. In this way he lingered some time at Tullibody, the seat of the father of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and grandfather of his friend Mr. George Abercromby (now Lord Abercromby); and heard from the old gentleman's own lips his narrative of a journey which he had been obliged to make, shortly after he first settled in Stirlingshire, to the wild retreat of Rob Roy. The venerable laird told how he was received by the cateran "with much courtesy," in a cavern exactly such as that of *Bean Lean;* dined on collops cut from some of his own cattle, which he recognized hanging by their heels from the rocky roof beyond; and returned in all safety, after concluding a bargain of *blackmail* — in virtue of which annual payment Rob Roy guaranteed the future security of his herds against, not his own followers merely, but all freebooters whatever. Scott next visited his friend Edmonstone, at Newton, a beautiful seat close to the ruins of the once magnificent Castle of Doune, and heard another aged gentleman's vivid recollections of all that happened there when John Home, the author of Douglas, and other Hanoverian prisoners, escaped from the Highland garrison in 1745.[1] Proceeding towards the sources of the Teith, he was received for the first time under a roof which, in subsequent years, he regularly revisited, that of another of his associates, Buchanan, the young Laird of Cambusmore. It was thus that the scenery of Loch Katrine came to be so associated with "the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days," that to compose The Lady of the Lake was "a labor of love, and no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced."[1] It was starting from the same house, when the poem itself had made some progress, that he put to the test the practicability of riding from the banks of Loch Vennachar to the Castle of Stirling within the brief space which he had assigned to Fitz-James's Grey Bayard, after the duel with Roderick Dhu; and the principal landmarks in the description of that fiery progress are so many hospitable mansions, all familiar to him at the same period — Blairdrummond, the residence of Lord Kaimes; Ochtertyre, that of John Ramsay, the scholar and antiquary (now best remembered for his kind and sagacious advice to Burns); and "the lofty brow of ancient Kier," the splendid seat of the chief family of the name of Stirling; from which, to say nothing of remoter objects, the prospect has, on one hand, the rock of "Snowdon," and in front the field of Bannockburn.

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[1] *Waverley*, chap. xxxviii. note.

Another resting-place was Craighall, in Perthshire, the seat of the Rattrays, a family related to Mr. Clerk, who accompanied him. From the position of this striking place, as Mr. Clerk at once perceived, and as the author afterwards confessed to him, that of the *Tully-Veolan* was very faithfully copied; though in the description of the house itself, and its gardens, many features were adopted from Bruntsfield and Ravelston.[2] Mr. Clerk has told me that he went through the first chapters of Waverley without more than a vague suspicion of the new novelist; but that when he read the arrival at Tully-Veolan, his suspicion was at once converted into certainty, and he handed the book to a common friend of his and the author's, saying, "This is Scott's — and I 'll lay a bet you 'll find such and such things in the next chapter." I hope Mr. Clerk will forgive me for mentioning *the* particular circumstance that first flashed the conviction on his mind. In the course of a ride from Craighall they had both become considerably fagged and heated, and Clerk, seeing the smoke of a *clachan* a little way before them, ejaculated — "How agreeable if we should here fall in with one of those signposts where a red lion predominates over a punch-bowl!" The phrase happened to tickle Scott's fancy — he often introduced it on similar occasions afterwards — and at the distance of twenty years Mr. Clerk was at no loss to recognize an old acquaintance in the "huge bear" which "predominates" over the stone basin in the courtyard of Baron Bradwardine.

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[1] Introduction to *The Lady of the Lake*, 1830.

[2] *Waverley*, chap. viii.

I believe the longest stay he made this autumn was at Meigle in Forfarshire, the seat of Patrick Murray of Simprim, a gentleman whose enthusiastic passion for antiquities, and especially military antiquities, had peculiarly endeared him both to Scott and Clerk. Here Adam Ferguson, too, was of the party; and I have often heard them each and all dwell on the thousand scenes of adventure and merriment which diversified that visit. In the village churchyard, close beneath Mr. Murray's gardens, tradition still points out the tomb of Queen Guenever; and the whole district abounds in objects of historical interest. Amidst them they spent their wandering days, while their evenings passed in the joyous festivity of a wealthy young bachelor's establishment, or sometimes under the roofs of neighbors less refined than their host, the *Balmawhapples* of the Braes of Angus. From Meigle they made a trip to Dunnottar Castle, the ruins of the huge old fortress of the Earls Marischall, and it was in the churchyard of that place that Scott then saw for the first and last time Robert Paterson, the living *Old Mortality*. He and Mr. Walker, the minister of the parish, found the poor man refreshing the epitaphs on the tombs of certain Cameronians who had fallen under the oppressions of James the Second's brief insanity. Being invited into the manse after dinner to take a glass of whiskey-punch, "to which he was supposed to have no objections," he joined the minister's party accordingly; but "he was in bad humor," says Scott, "and, to use his own phrase, had no freedom for conversation. His spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing, in a certain Aberdonian kirk, the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations."

It was also while he had his headquarters at Meigle at this time that Scott visited for the first time *Glammis*, the residence of the Earls of Strathmore, by far the noblest specimen of the real feudal castle, entire and perfect, that had as yet come under his inspection. What its aspect was when he first saw it, and how grievously he lamented the change it had undergone when he revisited it some years afterwards, he has recorded in one of the most striking passages that I think ever came from his pen. Commenting, in his Essay on Landscape Gardening (1828), on the proper domestic ornaments of the Castle *Pleasaunce*, he has this beautiful burst of lamentation over the barbarous innovations of *the Capability men:* — "Down went many a trophy of old magnificence, courtyard, ornamented enclosure, fosse, avenue, barbican, and every external muniment of battled wall and flanking tower, out of the midst of which the ancient dome, rising high above all its characteristic accompaniments, and seemingly girt round by its appropriate defences, which again circled each other in their different gradations, looked, as it should, the queen and mistress of the surrounding country. It was thus that the huge old tower of Glammis, 'whose birth tradition notes not,' once showed its lordly head above seven circles (if I remember aright) of defensive boundaries, through which the friendly guest was admitted, and at each of which a suspicious person was unquestionably put to his answer. A disciple of Kent had the cruelty to render this splendid old mansion (the more modern part of which was the work of Inigo Jones) more *parkish*, as he was pleased to call it; to raze all those exterior defences, and bring his mean and paltry gravel-walk up to the very door from which, deluded by the name, one might have imagined Lady Macbeth (with the form and features of Siddons) issuing forth to receive King Duncan. It is thirty years and upwards since I have seen Glammis, but I have not yet forgotten or forgiven the atrocity which, under pretence of improvement, deprived that lordly place of its appropriate accompaniments,

> 'Leaving an ancient dome and towers like these
> Beggar'd and outraged.' "[1]

The night he spent at the yet unprofaned Glammis in 1793 was, as he elsewhere says, one of the "*two* periods distant from each other" at which he could recollect experiencing "that degree of superstitious awe which his countrymen call *eerie*."

"The heavy pile," he writes, "contains much in its appearance, and in the traditions connected with it, impressive to the imagination. It was the scene of the murder of a Scottish King of great antiquity — not indeed the gracious Duncan, with whom the name naturally associates itself, but Malcolm II. It contains also a curious monument of the peril of feudal times, being a secret chamber, the entrance of which, by the law or custom of the family, must only be known to three persons at once, namely, the Earl of Strathmore, his heir-apparent, and any third person whom they may take into their confidence. The extreme antiquity of the building is vouched by the thickness of the walls, and the wild straggling arrangement of the accommodation within doors. As the late Earl seldom resided at Glammis, it was when I was there but half furnished, and that with movables of great antiquity, which, with the pieces of chivalric armor hanging on the walls, greatly contributed to the general effect of the whole. After a very hospitable reception from the late Peter Proctor, seneschal of the castle, I was conducted to my apartment in a distant part of the building. I must own, that when I heard door after door shut, after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself as too far from the living, and somewhat too near the dead. We had passed through what is called *the King's Room*, a vaulted apartment, garnished with stags' antlers and other trophies of the chase, and said by tradition to be the spot of Malcolm's murder, and I had an idea of the vicinity of the castle chapel. In spite of the truth of history, the whole night scene in Macbeth's Castle rushed at once upon me, and struck my mind more forcibly than even when I have seen its terrors represented by John Kemble and his inimitable sister. In a word, I experienced sensations which, though not remarkable for timidity or superstition, did not fail to affect me to the point of being disagreeable, while they were mingled at the same time with a strange and indescribable sort of pleasure, the recollection of which affords me gratification at this moment." [1]

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[1] Wordsworth's Sonnet on Neidpath Castle.

He alludes here to the hospitable reception which had preceded the mingled sensations of this *eerie* night; but one of his notes on Waverley touches this not unimportant part of the story more distinctly; for we are there informed that the *silver bear* of Tully-Veolan, "the *poculum potatorium* of the valiant baron," had its prototype at Glammis — a massive beaker of silver, double gilt, moulded into the form of a *lion*, the name and bearing of the Earls of Strathmore, and containing about an English pint of wine. "The author," he says, "ought perhaps to be ashamed of recording that he had the honor of swallowing the contents of *the lion;* and the recollection of the feat suggested the story of the Bear of Bradwardine."

From this pleasant tour, so rich in its results, Scott returned in time to attend the autumnal assizes at Jedburgh, on which occasion he made his first appearance as counsel in a criminal court; and had the satisfaction of helping a veteran poacher and sheep-stealer to escape through some of the meshes of the law. "You 're a lucky scoundrel," Scott whispered to his client, when the verdict was pronounced. "I 'm just o' your mind," quoth the desperado, "and I 'll send ye a maukin[1] the morn, man." I am not sure whether it was at these assizes or the next in the same town, that he had less success in the case of a certain notorious housebreaker. The man, however, was well aware that no skill could have baffled the clear evidence against him, and was, after his fashion, grateful for such exertions as had been made in his behalf. He requested the young advocate to visit him once more before he left the place. Scott's curiosity induced him to accept this invitation, and his friend, as soon as they were alone together in the *condemned cell*, said — "I am very sorry, sir, that I have no fee to offer you — so let me beg your acceptance of two bits of advice which may be useful perhaps when you come to have a house of your own. I am done with practice, you see, and here is my legacy. Never keep a large watchdog out of doors — we can always silence them cheaply — indeed if it be a *dog*, 't is easier than whistling — but tie a little tight yelping terrier within; and secondly, put no trust in nice, clever, gimcrack locks — the only thing that bothers us is a huge old heavy one, no matter how simple the construction, — and the ruder and rustier the key, so much the better for the housekeeper." I remember hearing him tell this story some thirty years after at a Judges' dinner at Jedburgh, and he summed it up with a rhyme — "Ay, ay, my lord," (I think he addressed his friend Lord Meadowbank) —

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[1] *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, p. 398.

> "Yelping terrier, rusty key,
> Was Walter Scott's best Jeddart fee."

At these, or perhaps the next assizes, he was also counsel in an appeal case touching a cow which his client had sold as sound, but which the court below (the sheriff) had pronounced to have what is called *the cliers* — a disease analogous to glanders in a horse. In opening his case before Sir David Rae, Lord Eskgrove, Scott stoutly maintained the healthiness of the cow, who, as he said, had merely a cough. "Stop there," quoth the judge; "I have had plenty of healthy kye in my time, but I never heard of ane of them coughing. A coughin' cow! — that will never do. Sustain the sheriff's judgment, and decern."

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[1] A hare.

A day or two after this, Scott and his old companion were again on their way into Liddesdale, and "just," says the Shortreed Memorandum, "as we were passing by Singdon, we saw a grand herd o' cattle a' feeding by the roadside, and a fine young bullock, the best in the whole lot, was in the midst of them, coughing lustily. 'Ah,' said Scott, 'what a pity for my client that old Eskgrove had not taken Singdon on his way to the town. That bonny creature would have saved us —

> "A Daniel come to judgment, yea a Daniel;
> O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!"' "

TO PATRICK MURRAY OF SIMPRIM, ESQ., MEIGLE.

Rosebank, near Kelso, September 13, 1793.

Dear Murray, — I would have let fly an epistle at you long ere this, had I not known I should have some difficulty in hitting so active a traveller, who may in that respect be likened unto a bird of passage. Were you to follow the simile throughout, I might soon expect to see you winging your way to the southern climes, instead of remaining to wait the approach of winter in the colder regions of the north. Seriously, I have been in weekly hopes of hearing of your arrival in the Merse, and have been qualifying myself by constant excursions to be your Border *Cicerone.*

As the facetious Linton will no doubt make one of your party, I have got by heart for his amusement a reasonable number of Border ballads, most of them a little longer than Chevy Chase, which I intend to throw in at intervals, just by way of securing my share in the conversation. As for *you*, as I know your picturesque turn, I can be in this country at no loss how to cater for your entertainment, especially if you would think of moving before the fall of the leaf. I believe with respect to the real *To Kalon*, few villages can surpass that near which I am now writing; and as to your rivers, it is part of my creed that the Tweed and Teviot yield to none in the world, nor do I fear that even in your eyes, which have been feasted on classic ground, they will greatly sink in comparison with the Tiber or Po. Then for antiquities, it is true we have got no temples or heathenish fanes to show; but if substantial old castles and ruined abbeys will serve in their stead, they are to be found in abundance. So much for Linton and you. As for Mr. Robertson,[1] I don't know quite so well how to bribe him. We had indeed lately a party of strollers here, who might in some degree have entertained him, *i. e.*, in case he felt no compassion for the horrid and tragical murders which they nightly committed, — but now, *Alas, Sir! the players be gone.*

I am at present very uncertain as to my own motions, but I still hope to be northwards again before the commencement of the session, which (d—n it) is beginning to draw nigher than I could wish. I would esteem myself greatly favored by a few lines informing me of your motions when they are settled; since visiting you, should I go north, or attending you if you come this way, are my two grand plans of amusement.

What think you of our politics now? Had I been within reach of you, or any of the chosen, I suspect the taking of Valenciennes would have been sustained as a reason for examining the contents of t'other bottle, which has too often suffered for slighter pretences. I have little doubt, however, that by the time we meet in glory (terrestrial glory, I mean) Dunkirk will be an equally good apology. Adieu, my good friend; remember me kindly to Mr. Robertson, to Linton, and to the Baronet. I understand both these last intend seeing you soon. I am very sincerely yours, WALTER SCOTT.

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[1] Dr. Robertson was tutor to the Laird of Simprim, and afterwards minister of Meigle — a man of great worth, and an excellent scholar. In his younger days he was fond of the theatre, and encouraged and directed *Simprim, Grogg, Linton & Co.* in their histrionic diversions. — (1839.)

The winter of 1793–94 appears to have been passed like the preceding one: the German class resumed their sittings; Scott spoke in his debating club on the questions of Parliamentary Reform and the Inviolability of the Person of the First Magistrate, which the circumstances of the time had invested with extraordinary interest, and in both of which he no doubt took the side adverse to the principles of the English, and the practice of the French Liberals. His love-affair continued on exactly the same footing as before; — and for the rest, like the young heroes in Redgauntlet, he "swept the boards of the Parliament House with the skirts of his gown; laughed, and made others laugh; drank claret at Bayle's, Fortune's, and Walker's, and eat oysters in the Covenant Close." On his desk "the new novel most in repute lay snugly intrenched beneath Stair's Institute, or an open volume of Decisions;" and his dressing-table was littered with "old play-bills, letters respecting a meeting of the Faculty, Rules of the Speculative, Syllabus of Lectures — all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains everything but briefs and bank-notes." His professional occupation was still very slender; but he took a lively interest in the proceedings of the criminal court, and more especially in those arising out of the troubled state of the public feeling as to politics.

In the spring of 1794 I find him writing to his friends in Roxburghshire with great exultation about the "good spirit" manifesting itself among the upper classes of the citizens of Edinburgh, and, above all, the organization of a regiment of volunteers, in which his brother Thomas, now a fine active young man, equally handsome and high-spirited, was enrolled as a grenadier, while, as he remarks, his own "unfortunate infirmity" condemned him to be "a mere spectator of the drills." In the course of the same year, the plan of a corps of volunteer light horse was started; and, if the recollection of Mr. Skene be accurate, the suggestion originally proceeded from Scott himself, who certainly had a principal share in its subsequent success. He writes to his uncle at Rosebank, requesting him to be on the lookout for a "strong gelding, such as would suit a stalwart dragoon;" and intimating his intention to part with his collection of Scottish coins, rather than not be mounted to his mind. The corps, however, was not organized for some time; and in the mean while he had an opportunity of displaying his zeal in a manner which Captain Scott by no means considered as so respectable.

A party of Irish medical students began, towards the end of April, to make themselves remarkable in the Edinburgh Theatre, where they mustered in a particular corner of the pit, and lost no opportunity of insulting the Loyalists of the boxes, by calling for revolutionary tunes, applauding every speech that could bear a seditious meaning, and drowning the national anthem in howls and hootings. The young Tories of the Parliament House resented this license warmly, and after a succession of minor disturbances, the quarrel was put to the issue of a regular trial by combat. Scott was conspicuous among the juvenile advocates and solicitors who on this grand night assembled in front of the pit, armed with stout cudgels, and determined to have God save the King not only played without interruption, but sung in full chorus by both company and audience. The Irishmen were ready at the first note of the anthem. They rose, clapped on their hats, and brandished their shillelahs; a stern battle ensued, and after many a head had been cracked, the Loyalists at length found themselves in possession of the field. In writing to Simprim a few days afterwards, Scott says — "You will be glad to hear that the *affair* of Saturday passed over without any worse consequence to the Loyalists than that five, including your friend and humble servant Colonel Grogg, have been bound over to the peace, and obliged to give bail for their good behavior, which, you may believe, was easily found. The said Colonel had no less than three broken heads laid to his charge by as many of the Democrats." Alluding to Simprim's then recent appointment as Captain in the Perthshire Fencibles (Cavalry), he adds — "Among my own military (I mean mock-military) achievements, let me not fail to congratulate you and the country on the real character you have agreed to accept. Remember, in case of real action, I shall beg the honor of admission to your troop as a volunteer."

One of the theatrical party, Sir Alexander Wood, whose notes lie before me, says — "Walter was certainly our Coryphæus, and signalized himself splendidly in this desperate fray; and nothing used afterwards to afford him more delight than dramatizing its incidents. Some of the most efficient of our allies were persons previously unknown to him, and of several of these whom he had particularly observed, he never lost sight afterwards. There were, I believe, cases in which they owed most valuable assistance in life to his recollection of *the playhouse row.*" To this last part of Sir Alexander's testimony I can also add mine; and I am sure my worthy friend, Mr. Donald M'Lean, W. S., will gratefully confirm it. When that gentleman became candidate for some office in the Exchequer, about 1822 or 1823, and Sir Walter's interest was requested on his behalf, — "To be sure!" said he; "did not he sound the charge upon Paddy? Can I ever forget Donald's *Sticks by G—t?*"[1]

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[1] According to a friendly critic, one of the Liberals exclaimed, as the *row* was thickening, "No Blows!" — and Donald, suiting the action to the word, responded, "Plows by ——!" — (1839.)

On the 9th May, 1794, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule writes to him — "I was last night at Rosebank, and your uncle told me he had been giving you a very long and very sage lecture upon the occasion of these Edinburgh squabbles; I am happy to hear they are now at an end. They were rather of the serious cast, and though you encountered them with spirit and commendable resolution, I, with your uncle, should wish to see your abilities conspicuous on another theatre." The same gentleman, in his next letter (June 3), congratulates Scott on having "seen *his name in the newspaper*," namely, as counsel for another Roxburghshire laird, by designation *Bedrule*. Such, no doubt, was Abbotrule's "other theatre."

Scott spent the long vacation of this year chiefly in Roxburghshire, but again visited Keir, Cambusmore, and others of his friends in Perthshire, and came to Edinburgh, early in September, to be present at the trials of Watt and Downie, on a charge of high treason. Watt seems to have tendered his services to Government as a spy upon the Society of the Friends of the People in Edinburgh, but ultimately, considering himself as underpaid, to have embraced, to their wildest extent, the schemes he had become acquainted with in the course of this worthy occupation; and he, and one Downie, a mechanic, were now arraigned as having taken a prominent part in the organizing of a plot for a general rising in Edinburgh, to seize the Castle, the Bank, the persons of the Judges, and proclaim a Provisional Republican Government; all which was supposed to have been arranged in concert with the Hardies, Thelwalls, Holcrofts, and so forth, who were a few weeks later brought to trial in London for an alleged conspiracy to "summon delegates to a National Convention, with a view to subvert the Government, and levy war upon the King." The English prisoners were acquitted, but Watt and Downie were not so fortunate. Scott writes as follows to his aunt, Miss Christian Rutherford, then at Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire: —

ADVOCATES' LIBRARY, 5th September, 1794.

My dear Miss Christy will perceive, from the date of this epistle, that I have accomplished my purpose of coming to town to be present at the trial of the Edinburgh traitors. I arrived here on Monday evening from Kelso, and was present at Watt's trial on Wednesday, which displayed to the public the most atrocious and deliberate plan of villainy which has occurred, perhaps, in the annals of Great Britain. I refer you for particulars to the papers, and shall only add, that the equivocations and perjury of the witnesses (most of them being accomplices in what they called the *great plan*) set the abilities of Mr. Anstruther, the King's counsel, in the most striking point of view. The patience and temper with which he tried them on every side, and screwed out of them the evidence they were so anxious to conceal, showed much knowledge of human nature; and the art with which he arranged the information he received, made the trial, upon the whole, the most interesting I ever was present at. Downie's trial is just now going forwards over my head; but as the evidence is just the same as formerly brought against Watt, is not so interesting. You will easily believe that on Wednesday my curiosity was too much excited to retire at an early hour, and, indeed, I sat in the Court from seven in the morning till two the next morning; but as I had provided myself with some cold meat and a bottle of wine, I contrived to support the fatigue pretty well. It strikes me, upon the whole, that the plan of these miscreants might, from its very desperate and improbable nature, have had no small chance of succeeding, at least as far as concerned cutting off the soldiers, and obtaining possession of the banks, besides shedding the blood of the most distinguished inhabitants. There, I think, the evil must have stopped, unless they had further support than has yet appeared. Stooks was the prime mover of the whole, and the person who supplied the money; and our theatrical disturbances are found to have formed one link of the chain. So, I have no doubt, Messrs. Stooks, Burk, etc., would have found out a new way of paying old debts. The *people* are perfectly quiescent upon this grand occasion, and seem to interest themselves very little in the fate of their *soi-disant friends*. The Edinburgh volunteers make a respectable and formidable appearance already. They are exercised four hours almost every day, with all the rigor of military discipline. The grenadier company consists entirely of men above six feet. So much for public news.

As to home intelligence — you know that my mother and Anne had projected a *jaunt* to Inverleithen; fate, however, had destined otherwise. The intended day of departure was ushered in by a most complete deluge, to which, and the consequent disappointment, our proposed travellers did not submit with that Christian meekness which might have beseemed. In short, both within and without doors, it was a *devil* of a day. The second was like unto it. The third day came a post, a killing post,[1] and in the shape of a letter from this fountain of health, informed us no lodgings were to be had there; so, whatever be its virtues, or the grandeur attending a journey to its streams, we might as well have proposed to visit the river Jordan, or the walls of Jericho. Not so our heroic John; he has been arrived here for some time (much the same as when he went away), and has formed the desperate resolution of riding out with me to Kelso to-morrow morning. I have stayed a day longer, waiting for the arrival of a pair of new boots and buckskin etcs., in which the soldier is to be equipt. I ventured to hint the convenience of a roll of diaculum plaister, and a box of the most approved horseman-salve, in which recommendation our doctor[2] warmly joined. His impatience for the journey has been somewhat cooled by some inclination yesterday displayed by his charger (a pony belonging to Anne) to lay his warlike rider in the dust — a purpose he had nearly effected. He next mounted Queen Mab, who treated him with little more complaisance, and, in carters' phrase, would neither *hap* nor *wynd* till she got rid of him. Seriously, however, if Jack has not returned covered with laurels, a crop which the Rock[1] no longer produces, he has brought back all his own good-nature, and a manner considerably improved, so that he is at times very agreeable company. Best love to Miss R., Jean, and Anne (I hope they are improved at the battledore), and the boys, not forgetting my friend Archy, though least not last in my remembrance. Best compliments to the Colonel.[2] I shall remember with pleasure Ashestiel hospitality, and not without a desire to put it to the proof next year. Adieu, ma chère amie. When you write, direct to Rosebank, and I shall be a good boy, and write you another sheet of nonsense soon. All friends here well. Ever yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.

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[1] "The third day comes a frost, a killing frost."
King Henry VIII.

[2] Dr. Rutherford.

The letter, of which the following is an extract, must have been written in October or November — Scott having been in Liddesdale, and again in Perthshire, during the interval. It is worth quoting for the little domestic allusions with which it concludes, and which every one who has witnessed the discipline of a Presbyterian family of the old school, at the time of preparation for *the Communion*, will perfectly understand. Scott's father, though on particular occasions he could permit himself, like Saunders Fairford, to play the part of a good Amphitryon, was habitually ascetic in his habits. I have heard his son tell, that it was common with him, if any one observed that the soup was good, to taste it again, and say, — "Yes, it is too good, bairns," and dash a tumbler of cold water into his plate. It is easy, therefore, to imagine with what rigidity he must have enforced the ultra-Catholic severities which marked, in those days, the yearly or half-yearly *retreat* of the descendants of John Knox.

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[1] Captain John Scott had been for some time with his regiment at Gibraltar.

[2] Colonel Russell of Ashestiel, married to a sister of Scott's mother.

TO MISS CHRISTIAN RUTHERFORD, ASHESTIEL.

Previous to my ramble, I stayed a single day in town, to witness the exit of the *ci-devant* Jacobin, Mr. Watt. It was a very solemn scene, but the pusillanimity of the unfortunate victim was astonishing, considering the boldness of his nefarious plans. It is matter of general regret that his associate Downie should have received a reprieve, which, I understand, is now prolonged for a second month, I suppose to wait the issue of the London trials. Our volunteers are now completely embodied, and, notwithstanding the heaviness of their dress, have a martial and striking appearance. Their accuracy in firing and manœuvring excites the surprise of military gentlemen, who are the best judges of their merit in that way. Tom is very proud of the grenadier company, to which he belongs, which has indisputably carried off the palm upon all public occasions. And now, give me leave to ask you whether the approaching *winter* does not remind you of your snug parlor in George's Street? Do you not feel a little uncomfortable when you see

> "how bleak and bare
> He wanders o'er the heights of *Yair?*"

Amidst all this regard for your accommodation, don't suppose I am devoid of a little self-interest when I press your speedy return to Auld Reekie, for I am really tiring excessively to see the said parlor again inhabited. Besides that, I want the assistance of your eloquence to convince my honored father that Nature did not mean me either for a vagabond or *travelling merchant*, when she honored me with the wandering propensity lately so conspicuously displayed. I saw Dr yesterday, who is well. I did not choose to intrude upon the little lady, this being sermon week; for the same reason we are looking very religious and very sour at home. However, it is with *some folk* selon les règles, that in proportion as they are pure themselves, they are entitled to render uncomfortable those whom they consider as less perfect. Best love to Miss R., cousins and friends in general, and believe me ever most sincerely yours, WALTER SCOTT.

In July, 1795, a young lad, James Niven by name, who had served for some time with excellent character on board a ship of war, and been discharged in consequence of a wound which disabled one of his hands, had the misfortune, in firing off a toy cannon in one of the narrow wynds of Edinburgh, to kill on the spot David Knox, one of the attendants of the Court of Session; a button, or some other hard substance, having been accidentally inserted with his cartridge. Scott was one of his counsel when he was arraigned for murder, and had occasion to draw up a written argument or *information* for the prisoner, from which I shall make a short quotation. Considered as a whole, the production seems both crude and clumsy, but the following passages have, I think, several traces of the style of thought and language which he afterwards made familiar to the world: —

> "Murder," he writes, "or the premeditated slaughter of a citizen, is a crime of so deep and scarlet a dye, that there is scarce a nation to be found in which it has not, from the earliest period, been deemed worthy of a capital punishment. 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' is a general maxim which has received the assent of all times and countries. But it is equally certain that even the rude legislators of former days soon perceived that the death of one man may be occasioned by another, without the slayer himself being the proper object of the *lex talionis.* Such an accident may

happen either by the carelessness of the killer, or through that excess and vehemence of passion to which humanity is incident. In either case, though blamable, he ought not to be confounded with the cool and deliberate assassin, and the species of criminality attaching itself to those acts has been distinguished by the term *dolus*, in opposition to the milder term *culpa*. Again, there may be a third species of homicide, in which the perpetrator being the innocent and unfortunate cause of casual misfortune, becomes rather an object of compassion than punishment.

"Admitting there may have been a certain degree of culpability in the panel's conduct, still there is one circumstance which pleads strongly in his favor, so as to preclude all presumption of *dole*. This is the frequent practice, whether proper or improper, of using this amusement in the streets. It is a matter of public notoriety, that boys of all ages and descriptions are, or at least till the late very proper proclamation of the magistrates were, to be seen every evening in almost every corner of this city, amusing themselves with fire-arms and small cannons, and that without being checked or interfered with. When the panel, a poor ignorant raw lad, lately discharged from a ship of war — certainly not the most proper school to learn a prudent aversion to unlucky or mischievous practices — observed the sons of gentlemen of the first respectability engaged in such amusements, unchecked by their parents or by the magistrates, surely it can hardly be expected that he should discover that in imitating them in so common a practice, he was constituting himself *hostis humani generis*, a wretch the pest and scourge of mankind.

"There is, no doubt, attached to every even the most innocent of casual slaughter, a certain degree of blame, inasmuch as almost everything of the kind might have been avoided had the slayer exhibited the strictest degree of diligence. A well-known and authentic story will illustrate the proposition. A young gentleman, just married to a young lady of whom he was passionately fond, in affectionate trifling presented at her a pistol, of which he had drawn the charge some days before. The lady, entering into the joke, desired him to fire: he did so, and shot her dead; the pistol having been again charged by his servant without his knowledge. Can any one read this story, and feel any emotion but that of sympathy towards the unhappy husband? Can they ever connect the case with an idea of punishment? Yet, divesting it of these interesting circumstances which act upon the imagination, it is precisely that of the panel at your Lordships' Bar; and though no one will pretend to say that such a homicide is other than casual, yet there is not the slightest question but it might have been avoided had the killer taken the precaution of examining his piece. But this is not the degree of *culpa* which can raise a misfortune to the pitch of a crime. It is only an instance that no accident can take place without its afterwards being discovered that the chief actor might have avoided committing it, had he been gifted with the spirit of prophecy, or with such an extreme degree of prudence as is almost equally rare.

"In the instance of shooting at butts, or at a bird, the person killed must have been somewhat in the line previous to the discharge of the shot, otherways it could never have come near him. The shooter must therefore have been guilty *culpæ levis seu levissimæ* in firing while the deceased was in such a situation. In like manner, it is difficult to conceive how death should happen in consequence of a boxing or wrestling match, without some excess upon the part of the killer. Nay, in the exercise of the martial amusements of our forefathers, even by royal commission, should a champion be slain in running his barriers, or performing his tournament, it could scarcely happen without some *culpa seu levis seu levissima* on the part of his antagonist. Yet all these are enumerated in the English lawbooks as instances of casual homicide only; and we may therefore safely conclude, that by the law of the sister country a slight degree of blame will not subject the slayer *per infortunium* to the penalties of culpable homicide.

"Guilt, as an object of punishment, has its origin in the mind and intention of the actor; and therefore, where that is wanting, there is no proper object of chastisement. A madman, for example, can no more properly be said to be guilty of murder than the sword with which he commits it, both being equally incapable of intending injury. In the present case, in like manner, although it ought no doubt to be matter of deep sorrow and contrition to the panel that his folly should have occasioned the loss of life to a fellow-creature; yet as that folly can neither be termed malice, nor yet doth amount to a gross negligence, he ought rather to be pitied than condemned. The fact done can never be recalled, and it rests with your Lordships to consider the case of this unfortunate young man, who has served his country in an humble though useful station, — deserved such a character as is given him in the letter of his officers, — and been disabled in that service. You will best judge how (considering he has suffered a confinement of six months) he can in humanity be the object of further or severer punishment, for a deed of which his mind at least, if not his hand, is guiltless. When a case is attended with some nicety, your Lordships will allow mercy to incline the balance of justice, well considering with the legislator of the East, 'It is better ten guilty should escape than that one innocent man should perish in his innocence.' "

The young sailor was acquitted.

To return for a moment to Scott's love-affair. I find him writing as follows, in March, 1795, to his cousin, William Scott, now Laird of Raeburn, who was then in the East Indies: — "The lady you allude to has been in town all this winter, and going a good deal into public, which has not in the least altered the meekness of her manners. Matters, you see, stand just as they did."

To another friend he writes thus, from Rosebank, on the 23d of August, 1795: —

It gave me the highest satisfaction to find, by the receipt of your letter of the 14th current, that you have formed precisely the same opinion with me, both with regard to the interpretation of [Miss Stuart's] letter as highly flattering and favorable, and to the mode of conduct I ought to pursue — for, after all, what she has pointed out is the most prudent line of conduct for us both, at least till better days, which, I think myself now entitled to suppose, she, as well as I myself, will look forward to with pleasure. If you were surprised at reading the important billet, you may guess how agreeably I was so at receiving it; for I had, to anticipate disappointment, struggled to suppress every rising gleam of hope; and it would be very difficult to describe the mixed feelings her letter occasioned, which, *entre nous*, terminated in a very hearty fit of crying. I read over her epistle about ten times a day, and always with new admiration of her generosity and candor — and as often take shame to myself for the mean suspicions, which, after knowing her so long, I could listen to, while endeavoring to guess how she would conduct herself. To tell you the truth, I cannot but confess that my *amour propre,* which one would expect should have been exalted, has suffered not a little upon this occasion, through a sense of my own *unworthiness*, pretty similar to that which afflicted Linton upon sitting down at Keir's table. I ought perhaps to tell you, what indeed you will perceive from her letter, that I was always attentive, while consulting with you upon the subject of my declaration, rather to under- than over-rate the extent of our intimacy. By the way, I must not omit mentioning the respect in which I hold your knowledge of the fair sex, and your capacity of advising in these matters, since it certainly is to your encouragement that I owe the present situation of my affairs. I wish to God, that, since you have acted as so useful an auxiliary during my attack, which has succeeded in bringing the enemy to terms, you would next sit down before some fortress yourself, and were it as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, I should, notwithstanding, have the highest expectations of your final success. Not a line from poor Jack — What can he be doing? Moping, I suppose, about some watering-place, and deluging his guts with specifics of every kind — or lowering and snorting in one corner of a post-chaise, with Kennedy, as upright and cold as a poker, stuck into the other. As for Linton, and Crab, I anticipate with pleasure their marvellous adventures, in the course of which

Dr. Black's *self-denying ordinance* will run a shrewd chance of being neglected.[1] They will be a source of fun for the winter evening conversations. Methinks I see the pair upon the mountains of Tipperary — John with a beard of three inches, united and blended with his shaggy black locks, an ellwand-looking cane with a gilt head in his hand, and a bundle in a handkerchief over his shoulder, exciting the cupidity of every Irish raparee who passes him, by his resemblance to a Jew pedlar who has sent forward his pack — Linton, tired of trailing his long legs, exalted in state upon an Irish garron, without stirrups, and a halter on its head, tempting every one to ask —

> "Who is that upon the pony,
> So long, so lean, so raw, so bony ?"[2]

— calculating, as he moves along, the expenses of the salt horse — and grinning a ghastly smile, when the hollow voice of his fellow-traveller observes — "God! Adam, if ye gang on at this rate, the eight shillings and sevenpence halfpenny will never carry us forward to my uncle's at Lisburn." Enough of a thorough Irish expedition.

We have a great marriage towards here — Scott of Harden, and a daughter of Count Brühl, the famous chess-player, a lady of sixteen quarters, half-sister to the Wyndhams. I wish they may come down soon, as we shall have fine racketing, of which I will, probably, get my share. I think of being in town some time next month, but whether for good and all, or only for a visit,

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[1] *Crab* was the nickname of a friend who had accompanied Ferguson this summer on an Irish tour. Dr. Black, celebrated for his discoveries in chemistry, was Adam Ferguson's uncle; and had, it seems, given the young travellers a strong admonition touching the dangers of Irish hospitality.

[2] These lines are part of a song on *Little-tony — i. e.*, the Parliamentary orator Littleton. They are quoted in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, originally published in 1791.

I am not certain. Oh, for November! Our meeting will be a little embarrassing one. How will she look, etc., etc., etc., are the important subjects of my present conjectures — how different from what they were three weeks ago! I give you leave to laugh when I tell you seriously, I had begun to "dwindle, peak, and pine," upon the subject — but now, after the charge I have received, it were a shame to resemble Pharaoh's lean kine. If good living and plenty of exercise can avert that calamity, I am in little danger of disobedience, and so, to conclude classically,

Dicite Io pœan, et Io bis dicite pœan! —

Jubeo te bene valere,

GUALTERUS SCOTT.

I have had much hesitation about inserting the preceding letter, but could not make up my mind to omit what seems to me a most exquisite revelation of the whole character of Scott at this critical period of his history, both literary and personal; — more especially of his habitual effort to suppress, as far as words were concerned, the more tender feelings, which were in no heart deeper than in his.

It must, I think, have been, while he was indulging his *vagabond* vein, during the autumn of 1795, that Mrs. Barbauld paid her visit to Edinburgh, and entertained a party at Mr. Dugald Stewart's, by reading Mr. William Taylor's then unpublished version of Bürger's Lenore. In the essay on Imitation of Popular Poetry, the reader has a full account of the interest with which Scott heard, some weeks afterwards, a friend's imperfect recollections of this performance; the anxiety with which he sought after a copy of the original German; the delight with which he at length perused it; and how, having just been reading the specimens of ballad poetry introduced into Lewis's romance of The Monk, he called to mind the early facility of versification which had lain so long in abeyance, and ventured to promise his friend a rhymed translation of Lenore from his own pen. The friend in question was Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess of Purgstall, the sister of his friend George Cranstoun, now Lord Corehouse. He began the task, he tells us, after supper, and did not retire to bed until he had finished it, having by that time worked himself into a state of excitement which set sleep at defiance.

Next morning, before breakfast, he carried his MS. to Miss Cranstoun, who was not only delighted but astonished at it; for I have seen a letter of hers to a common friend in the country, in which she says — "Upon my word, Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet — something of a cross, I think, between Burns and Gray." The same day he read it also to his friend Sir Alexander Wood, who retains a vivid recollection of the high strain of enthusiasm into which he had been exalted by dwelling on the wild unearthly imagery of the German bard. "He read it over to me," says Sir Alexander, "in a very slow and solemn tone, and after we had said a few words about its merits, continued to look at the fire silent and musing for some minutes, until he at length burst out with 'I wish to Heaven I could get a skull and two cross-bones.'" Wood said that if Scott would accompany him to the house of John Bell, the celebrated surgeon, he had no doubt this wish might be easily gratified. They went thither accordingly on the instant; — Mr. Bell smiled on hearing the object of their visit, and pointing to a closet, at the corner of his library, bade Walter enter and choose. From a well-furnished museum of mortality, he selected forthwith what seemed to him the handsomest skull and pair of cross-bones it contained, and wrapping them in his handkerchief, carried the formidable bundle home to George's Square. The trophies were immediately mounted on the top of his little bookcase; and when Wood visited him, after many years of absence from this country, he found them in possession of a similar position in his dressing-room at Abbotsford.[1]

All this occurred in the beginning of April, 1796. A few days afterwards, Scott went to pay a visit at a country house, where he expected to meet the "lady of his love." Jane Anne Cranstoun was in the secret of his attachment, and knew, that however doubtful might be Miss [Stuart's] feeling on that subject, she had a high admiration of Scott's abilities, and often corresponded with him on literary matters; so, after he had left Edinburgh, it occurred to her that she might perhaps forward his views in this quarter, by presenting him in the character of a printed author. William Erskine being called into her councils, a few copies of the ballad were forthwith thrown off in the most elegant style, and one, richly bound and blazoned, followed Scott in the course of a few days to the country. The verses were read and approved of, and Miss Cranstoun at least flattered herself that he had not made his first appearance in types to no purpose.[2]

I ought to have mentioned before, that in June, 1795, he was appointed one of the curators of the Advocates' Library, an office always reserved for those members of the Faculty who have the reputation of superior zeal in literary affairs. He had for colleagues David Hume, the Professor of Scots Law, and Malcolm Laing, the historian; and his discharge of his functions must have given satisfaction, for I find him further nominated, in March, 1796, together with Mr. Robert Hodgson Cay — an accomplished gentleman, afterwards Judge of the Admiralty Court in Scotland — to "put the Faculty's cabinet of medals in proper arrangement."

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[1] Sir A. Wood was himself the son of a distinguished surgeon in Edinburgh. He married one of the daughters of Sir William Forbes — rose in the diplomatic service — and died in 1846. — (1848.)

[2] This story was told by the Countess of Purgstall on her deathbed to Captain Basil Hall. See his *Schloss Hainfeld*, p. 333.

On the 4th of June, 1796 (the birthday of George III.), there seems to have been a formidable riot in Edinburgh, and Scott is found again in the front. On the 5th, he writes as follows to his aunt, Christian Rutherford, who was then in the north of Scotland, and had meant to visit, among other places, the residence of the "chère adorable."

EDINBURGH, 5th June, 1796.

MY CHÈRE AMIE, — Nothing doubting that your curiosity will be upon the tenters to hear the wonderful events of the long-expected 4th of June, I take the pen to inform you that not one worth mentioning has taken place. Were I inclined to prolixity, I might, indeed, narrate at length *how* near a thousand gentlemen (myself among the number) offered their services to the magistrates to act as *constables* for the preservation of the peace — how their services were accepted — what fine speeches were made upon the occasion — *how* they were furnished with pretty painted brown *batons* — *how* they were assembled in the aisle of the New Church, and treated with claret and sweetmeats — *how* Sir John Whiteford was chased by the mob, and *how* Tom, Sandy Wood, and I rescued him, and dispersed his tormentors *à beaux coups de batons* — *how* the Justice-Clerk's windows were broke by a few boys, and *how* a large body of constables and a press-gang of near two hundred men arrived, and were much disappointed at finding the coast entirely clear; with many other matters of equal importance, but of which you must be contented to remain in ignorance till you return to your castle. Seriously, everything, with the exception of the very trifling circumstances above mentioned, was perfectly quiet — much more so than during any King's birthday I can recollect. That very stillness, however, shows that something is brewing among our friends the Democrats, which they will take their own time of bringing forward. By the wise precautions of the magistrates, or rather of the provost, and the spirited conduct of the gentlemen, I hope their designs will be frustrated. Our association meets to-night, when we are to be divided into districts according to the place of our abode, places of rendezvous and captains named; so that, upon the hoisting of a flag on the Tron-steeple, and ringing out all the large bells, we can be on duty in less than five minutes. I am sorry to say that the complexion of the town seems to justify all precautions of this kind. I hope we shall demean ourselves as *quiet* and *peaceable* magistrates; and intend, for the purpose of learning the duties of my new office, to con diligently the instructions delivered to the watch by our brother Dogberry, of facetious memory. So much for information. By way of inquiry, pray let me know — that is, when you find a very idle hour — how you accomplished the perilous passage of her Majestie's Ferry without the assistance and escort of your preux-chevalier, and whether you will receive them on your return — how Miss R. and you are spending your time, whether stationary or otherwise — above all, whether you have been at [Invermay] and all the etcs., etcs., which the question involves. Having made out a pretty long scratch, which, as Win Jenkins says, will take you some time to decipher, I shall only inform you farther, that I shall tire excessively till you return to your shop. I beg to be remembered to Miss Kerr, and in particular to La Belle Jeanne. Best love to Miss Rutherford; and believe me ever, my dear Miss Christy, sincerely and affectionately your WALTER SCOTT.

During the autumn of 1796 he visited again his favorite haunts in Perthshire and Forfarshire. It was in the course of this tour that he spent a day or two at Montrose with his old tutor Mitchell, and astonished and grieved that worthy Presbyterian by his zeal about witches and fairies.[1] The only letter of his, written during this expedition, that I have recovered, was addressed to another of his clerical friends — one by no means of Mitchell's stamp — Mr. Walker, the minister of Dunnottar, and it is chiefly occupied with an account of his researches at a vitrified fort, in Kincardineshire, commonly called Lady Fenella's Castle, and, according to tradition, the scene of the murder of Kenneth III. While in the north, he visited also the residence of the lady who had now for so many years been the object of his attachment; and that his reception was not adequate to his expectations, may be gathered pretty clearly from some expressions in a letter addressed to him when at Montrose by his friend and confidante, Miss Cranstoun: —

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[1] See *ante*, p. 97.

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., POST-OFFICE, MONTROSE.

DEAR SCOTT, — Far be it from me to affirm that there are no diviners in the land. The voice of the people and the voice of God are loud in their testimony. Two years ago, when I was in the neighborhood of Montrose, we had recourse for amusement one evening to chiromancy, or, as the vulgar say, having our fortunes read; and read mine were in such a sort, that either my letters must have been inspected, or the devil was by in his own proper person. I never mentioned the circumstance since, for obvious reasons; but now that you are on the spot, I feel it my bounden duty to conjure you not to put your shoes rashly from off your feet, for you are not standing on holy ground.

I bless the gods for conducting your poor dear soul safely to Perth. When I consider the wilds, the forests, the lakes, the rocks — and the spirits in which you must have whispered to their startled echoes, it amazeth me how you escaped. Had you but dismissed your little squire and Earwig,[1] and spent a few days as Orlando would have done, all posterity might have profited by it; but to trot quietly away, without so much as one stanza to despair — never talk to me of love again — never, never, never! I am dying for your collection of exploits.

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[1] A servant-boy and pony.

When will you return? In the mean time, Heaven speed you! Be sober, and hope to the end.

William Taylor's translation of your ballad is published, and so inferior, that I wonder we could tolerate it. Dugald Stewart read yours to * * * * the other day. When he came to the fetter dance,[1] he looked up, and poor * * * * * was sitting with his hands nailed to his knees, and the big tears rolling down his innocent nose in so piteous a manner, that Mr. Stewart could not help bursting out a-laughing. An angry man was * * * * *. I have seen another edition, too, but it is below contempt. So many copies make the ballad famous, so that every day adds to your renown.

This here place is very, very dull. Erskine is in London; my dear Thomson at Daily; Macfarlan hatching Kant — and George [2] Fountainhall.[3] I have nothing more to tell you, but that I am most affectionately yours. Many an anxious thought I have about you. Farewell. — J. A. C.

[1] "'Dost fear? dost fear? — The moon shines clear; —
Dost fear to ride with me?
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!' —
'Oh, William, let them be!'

"'See there! see there! What yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain?' —
Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel,
A murderer in his chain.

"'Hollo! thou felon, follow here,
To bridal bed we ride;
And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
Before me and my bride.'

"And hurry, hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind, through hazel bush,
The wild career attends.

"Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode;
Splash, splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood.
The flashing pebbles flee."

[2] George Cranstoun, Lord Corehouse.

[3] Decisions by Lord Fountainhall.

The affair in which this romantic creature took so lively an interest was now approaching its end. It was known, before this autumn closed, that the lady of his vows had finally promised her hand to his amiable rival; and, when the fact was announced, some of those who knew Scott the best appear to have entertained very serious apprehensions as to the effect which the disappointment might have upon his feelings. For example, one of those brothers of *the Mountain* wrote as follows to another of them, on the 12th October, 1796: "Mr. [Forbes] marries Miss [Stuart]. This is not good news. I always dreaded there was some self-deception on the part of our romantic friend, and I now shudder at the violence of his most irritable and ungovernable mind. Who is it that says, 'Men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for LOVE'? I hope sincerely it may be verified on this occasion."

Scott had, however, in all likelihood, digested his agony during the solitary ride in the Highlands to which Miss Cranstoun's last letter alludes.

Talking of this story with Lord Kinnedder, I once asked him whether Scott never made it the subject of verses at the period. His own confession, that, even during the time when he had laid aside the habit of versification, he did sometimes commit "a sonnet on a mistress's eyebrow," had not then appeared. Lord Kinnedder answered, "Oh yes, he made many little stanzas about the lady, and he sometimes showed them to Cranstoun, Clerk, and myself — but we really thought them in general very poor. Two things of the kind, however, have been preserved — and one of them was done just after the conclusion of the business." He then took down a volume of the English Minstrelsy, and pointed out to me some lines On a Violet, which had not at that time been included in Scott's collected works. Lord Kinnedder read them over in his usual impressive, though not quite unaffected, manner, and said, "I remember well, that when I first saw these, I told him they were his best, but he had touched them up afterwards."

"The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen or copse or forest dingle.

"Though fair her gems of azure hue
Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining,
I 've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

"The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the sun be past its morrow,
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remained the tear of parting sorrow!"

In turning over a volume of MS. papers, I have found a copy of verses, which, from the hand, Scott had evidently written down within the last ten years of his life. They are headed "To Time — by a Lady;" but certain *initials* on the back satisfy me that the authoress was no other than the object of his first passion.[1] I think I must be pardoned for transcribing the lines which had dwelt so long on his memory — leaving it to the reader's fancy to picture the mood of mind in which the fingers of a gray-haired man may have traced such a relic of his youthful dreams: —

"Friend of the wretch oppress'd with grief,
Whose lenient hand, though slow, supplies
The balm that lends to care relief,
That wipes her tears — that checks her sighs!

"'T is thine the wounded soul to heal
That hopeless bleeds from sorrow's smart,
From stern misfortune's shaft to steal
The barb that rankles in the heart.

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[1] A very intimate friend both of Scott and of the lady tells me that these verses were great favorites of hers — she gave himself a copy of them, and no doubt her recitation had made them known to Scott — but that he believes them to have been composed by Mrs. Hunter of Norwich. — (1839.)

"What though with thee the roses fly,
And jocund youth's gay reign is o'er;
Though dimm'd the lustre of the eye,
And hope's vain dreams enchant no more?

"Yet in thy train come dove-eyed peace,
Indifference with her heart of snow;
At her cold couch, lo! sorrows cease,
No thorns beneath her roses grow.

"O haste to grant thy suppliant's prayer,
To me thy torpid calm impart;
Rend from my brow youth's garland fair,
But take the thorn that 's in my heart.

"Ah! why do fabling poets tell
That thy fleet wings outstrip the wind?
Why feign thy course of joy the knell,
And call thy slowest pace unkind?

"To me thy tedious feeble pace
Comes laden with the weight of years;
With sighs I view morn's blushing face,
And hail mild evening with my tears."

I venture to recall here to the reader's memory the opening of the twelfth chapter of Peveril of the Peak, written twenty-six years after the date of this youthful disappointment.

"Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth!"
Midsummer Night's Dream.

"The celebrated passage which we have prefixed to this chapter has, like most observations of the same author, its foundation in real experience. The period at which love is formed for the first time, and felt most strongly, is seldom that at which there is much prospect of its being brought to a happy issue. The state of artificial society opposes many complicated obstructions to early marriages; and the chance is very great, that such obstacles prove insurmountable. In fine, there are few men who do not look back in secret to some period of their youth, at which a sincere and early affection was repulsed or betrayed, or became abortive from opposing circumstances. It is these little passages of secret history, which leave a tinge of romance in every bosom, scarce permitting us, even in the most busy or the most advanced period of life, to listen with total indifference to a tale of true love."

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLICATION OF BALLADS AFTER BÜRGER. — SCOTT QUARTERMASTER OF THE EDINBURGH LIGHT HORSE. — EXCURSION TO CUMBERLAND. — GILSLAND WELLS. — MISS CARPENTER. — MARRIAGE

1796–1797

Rebelling, as usual, against circumstances, Scott seems to have turned with renewed ardor to his literary pursuits; and in that same October, 1796, he was "prevailed on," as he playfully expresses it, "by the *request of friends*, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of Lenore, with that of The Wild Huntsman, also from Bürger, in a thin quarto." The little volume, which has no author's name on the title-page, was printed for Manners and Miller of Edinburgh. The first named of these respectable publishers had been a fellow-student in the German class of Dr. Willich; and this circumstance probably suggested the negotiation. It was conducted by William Erskine, as appears from his postscript to a letter addressed to Scott by his sister, who, before it reached its destination, had become the wife of Mr. Campbell Colquhoun of Clathick and Killermont — in after-days Lord Advocate of Scotland. This was another of Scott's dearest female friends. The humble home which she shared with her brother during his early struggles at the Bar had been the scene of many of his happiest hours; and her letter affords such a pleasing idea of the warm affectionateness of the little circle that I cannot forbear inserting it: —

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., ROSEBANK, KELSO.

Monday evening.

If it were not that etiquette and I were constantly at war, I should think myself very blamable in thus trespassing against one of its laws ; but as it is long since I forswore its dominion, I have acquired a prescriptive right to act as I will — and I shall accordingly anticipate the station of a *matron* in addressing *a young man.*

I can express but a very, very little of what I feel, and shall ever feel, for your unintermitting friendship and attention. I have ever considered you as a brother, and shall *now* think myself entitled to make even larger claims on your confidence. Well do I remember the *dark* conference we lately held together ! The intention of unfolding *my own* future fate was often at my lips.

I cannot tell you my distress at leaving this house, wherein I have enjoyed so much real happiness, and giving up the service of so gentle a master, whose yoke was indeed easy. I will therefore only commend him to your care as the last bequest of Mary Anne Erskine, and conjure you to continue to each other through all your pilgrimage as you have commenced it. May every happiness attend you ! Adieu !

Your most sincere friend and sister,
M. A. E.

Mr. Erskine writes on the other page, "The poems are gorgeous, but I have made no bargain with any bookseller. I have told M. and M. that I won't be satisfied with indemnity, but an offer must be made. They will be out before the end of the week." On what terms the publication really took place, I know not.

It has already been mentioned that Scott owed his copy of Bürger's works to the young lady of Harden, whose marriage occurred in the autumn of 1795. She was daughter of Count Brühl of Martkirchen, long Saxon ambassador at the Court of St. James's, by his wife Almeria, Countess-Dowager of Egremont. The young kinsman was introduced to her soon after her arrival at Mertoun, and his attachment to German studies excited her attention and interest. Mrs. Scott supplied him with many standard German books, besides Bürger; and the gift of an Adelung's dictionary from his old ally, George Constable (Jonathan Oldbuck), enabled him to master their contents sufficiently for the purposes of translation. The ballad of The Wild Huntsman appears to have been executed during the month that preceded his first publication; and he was thenceforth engaged in a succession of versions from the dramas of Meier and Iffland, several of which are still extant in his MS., marked 1796 and 1797. These are all in prose like their originals; but he also versified at the same time some lyrical fragments of Goethe, as, for example, the Morlachian Ballad,

> "What yonder glimmers so white on the mountain,"

and the song from Claudina von Villa Bella. He consulted his friend at Mertoun on all these essays; and I have often heard him say, that, among those many "obligations of a distant date which remained impressed on his memory, after a life spent in a constant interchange of friendship and kindness," he counted not as the least, the lady's frankness in correcting his Scotticisms, and more especially his Scottish *rhymes*.

His obligations to this lady were indeed various; but I doubt, after all, whether these were the most important. He used to say that she was the first *woman of real fashion* that *took him* up; that she used the privileges of her sex and station in the truest spirit of kindness; set him right as to a thousand little trifles, which no one else would have ventured to notice; and, in short, did for him what no one but an elegant woman can do for a young man, whose early days have been spent in narrow and provincial circles. "When I first saw Sir Walter," she writes to me, "he was about four- or five-and-twenty, but looked much younger. He seemed bashful and awkward; but there were from the first such gleams of superior sense and spirit in his conversation, that I was hardly surprised when, after our acquaintance had ripened a little, I felt myself to be talking with a man of genius. He was most modest about himself, and showed his little pieces apparently without any consciousness that they could possess any claim on particular attention. Nothing so easy and good-humored as the way in which he received any hints I might offer, when he seemed to be tampering with the King's English. I remember particularly how he laughed at himself, when I made him take notice that 'the little two dogs,' in some of his lines, did not please an English ear accustomed to 'the two little dogs.'"

Nor was this the only person at Mertoun who took a lively interest in his pursuits. Harden entered into all the feelings of his beautiful bride on this subject; and his mother, the Lady Diana Scott, daughter of the last Earl of Marchmont, did so no less. She had conversed, in her early days, with the brightest ornaments of the cycle of Queen Anne, and preserved rich stores of anecdote, well calculated to gratify the curiosity and excite the ambition of a young enthusiast in literature. Lady Diana soon appreciated the minstrel of the clan; and, surviving to a remarkable age, she had the satisfaction of seeing him at the height of his eminence — the solitary person who could give the author of Marmion personal reminiscences of Pope.[1]

On turning to James Ballantyne's Memorandum (already quoted), I find an account of Scott's journey from Rosebank to Edinburgh, in the November after the Ballads from Bürger were published, which gives an interesting notion of his literary zeal and opening ambition at this remarkable epoch of his life. Mr. Ballantyne had settled in Kelso as a solicitor in 1795; but, not immediately obtaining much professional practice, time hung heavy on his hands, and he willingly listened, in the summer of 1796, to a proposal of some of the neighboring nobility and gentry respecting the establishment of a weekly newspaper,[1] in opposition to one of a democratic tendency, then widely circulated in Roxburghshire and the other Border counties. He undertook the printing and editing of this new journal, and proceeded to London, in order to engage correspondents and make other necessary preparations. While thus for the first time in the metropolis, he happened to meet with two authors, whose reputations were then in full bloom, — namely, Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin, — the former, a popular dramatist and novelist; the latter, a novelist of far greater merit, but "still more importantly distinguished," says the Memorandum before me, "by those moral, legal, political, and religious heterodoxies, which his talents enabled him to present to the world in a very captivating manner. His Caleb Williams had then just come out, and occupied as much public attention as any work has done before or since." "Both these eminent persons," Ballantyne continues, "I saw pretty frequently; and being anxious to hear whatever I could tell about the literary men in Scotland, they both treated me with remarkable freedom of communication. They were both distinguished by the clearness of their elocution, and very full of triumphant confidence in the truth of their systems. They were as willing to speak, therefore, as I could be to hear; and as I put my questions with all the fearlessness of a very young man, the result was, that I carried away copious and interesting stores of thought and information: that the greater part of what I heard was full of error, never entered into my contemplation. Holcroft at this time was a fine-looking, lively man, of green old age, somewhere about sixty. Godwin, some twenty years younger, was more shy and reserved. As to me, my delight and enthusiasm were boundless."

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[1] Mr. Scott of Harden's right to the peerage of Polwarth, as representing, through his mother, the line of Marchmont, was allowed by the House of Lords in 1835.

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[1] *The Kelso Mail.*

After returning home, Ballantyne made another journey to Glasgow for the purchase of types; and on entering the Kelso coach for this purpose, "It would not be easy," says he, "to express my joy on finding that Mr. Scott was to be one of my partners in the carriage, the only other passenger being a fine, stout, muscular, old Quaker. A very few miles reëstablished us on our ancient footing. Travelling not being half so speedy then as it is now, there was plenty of leisure for talk, and Mr. Scott was exactly what is called *the old man.* He abounded, as in the days of boyhood, in legendary lore, and had now added to the stock, as his recitations showed, many of those fine ballads which afterwards composed the Minstrelsy. Indeed, I was more delighted with him than ever; and, by way of reprisal, I opened on him my London budget, collected from Holcroft and Godwin. I doubt if Boswell ever showed himself a more skilful *Reporter* than I did on this occasion. Hour after hour passed away, and found my borrowed eloquence still flowing, and my companion still hanging on my lips with unwearied interest. It was customary in those days to break the journey (only forty miles) by dining on the road, the consequence of which was, that we both became rather oblivious; and after we had reëntered the coach, the worthy Quaker felt quite vexed and disconcerted with the silence which had succeeded so much conversation. 'I wish,' said he, 'my young friends, that you would cheer up, and go on with your pleasant songs and tales as before: they entertained me much.' And so," says Ballantyne, "it went on again until the evening found us in Edinburgh; and from that day, until within a very short time of his death — a period of not less than five-and-thirty years — I may venture to say that our intercourse never flagged."

The reception of the two ballads had, in the mean time, been favorable, in his own circle at least. The many inaccuracies and awkwardnesses of rhyme and diction, to which he alludes in republishing them towards the close of his life, did not prevent real lovers of poetry from seeing that no one but a poet could have transfused the daring imagery of the German in a style so free, bold, masculine, and full of life; but, wearied as all such readers had been with that succession of feeble, flimsy, lackadaisical trash which followed the appearance of the Reliques by Bishop Percy, the opening of such a new vein of popular poetry as these verses revealed would have been enough to produce lenient critics for far inferior translations. Many, as we have seen, sent forth copies of the Lenore about the same time; and some of these might be thought better than Scott's in particular passages; but, on the whole, it seems to have been felt and acknowledged by those best entitled to judge, that he deserved the palm. Meantime, we must not forget that Scotland had lost that very year the great poet Burns, — her glory and her shame. It is at least to be hoped that a general sentiment of self-reproach, as well as of sorrow, had been excited by the premature extinction of such a light; and, at all events, it is agreeable to know that they who had watched his career with the most affectionate concern were among the first to hail the promise of a more fortunate successor. Scott found on his table, when he reached Edinburgh, the following letters from two of Burns's kindest and wisest friends: —

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., ADVOCATE, GEORGE'S SQUARE.

My dear Sir, — I beg you will accept of my best thanks for the favor you have done me by sending me four copies of your beautiful translations. I shall retain two of them, as Mrs. Stewart and I both set a high value on them as gifts from the author. The other two I shall take the earliest opportunity of transmitting to a friend in England, who, I hope, may be instrumental in making their merits more generally known at the time of their first appearance. In a few weeks, I am fully persuaded they will engage public attention to the utmost extent of your wishes, without the aid of any recommendation whatever. I ever am, Dear Sir, yours most truly,

DUGALD STEWART.

CANONGATE, Wednesday evening.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, — On my return from Cardross, where I had been for a week, I found yours of the 14th, which had surely loitered by the way. I thank you most cordially for your present. I meet with little poetry nowadays that touches my heart; but your translations excite mingled emotions of pity and terror, insomuch, that I would not wish any person of weaker nerves to read William and Helen before going to bed. Great must be the original, if it equals the translation in energy and pathos. One would almost suspect you have used as much liberty with Bürger as Macpherson was suspected of doing with Ossian. It is, however, easier to *backspeir* you. Sober reason rejects the machinery as unnatural; it reminds me, however, of the magic of Shakespeare. Nothing has a finer effect than the repetition of certain words, that are echoes to the sense, as much as the celebrated lines in Homer about the rolling up and falling down of the stone: *Tramp, tramp! splash, splash!* is to me perfectly new; and much of the imagery is nature. I should consider this muse of yours (if you carry the intrigue far) more likely to steal your heart from the law than even a wife. I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

JO. RAMSAY.

OCHTERTYRE, 30th November, 1796.

Among other literary persons at a distance, I may mention George Chalmers, the celebrated antiquary, with whom he had been in correspondence from the beginning of this year, supplying him with Border ballads for the illustration of his researches into Scotch history. This gentleman had been made acquainted with Scott's large collections in that way by a common friend, Dr. Somerville, minister of Jedburgh, author of the History of

Queen Anne;[1] and the numerous MS. copies communicated to him in consequence were recalled in the course of 1799, when the plan of the Minstrelsy began to take shape. Chalmers writes in great transports about Scott's versions; but weightier encouragement came from Mr. Taylor of Norwich, himself the first translator of the Lenore.

> I need not tell you, sir [he writes], with how much eagerness I opened your volume — with how much glow I followed The Chase — or with how much alarm I came to William and Helen. Of the latter I will say nothing; praise might seem hypocrisy — criticism envy. The ghost nowhere makes his appearance so well as with you, or his exit so well as with Mr. Spenser. I like very much the recurrence of
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> "The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
> The flashing pebbles flee;"
>
> but of William and Helen I had resolved to say nothing. Let me return to The Chase, of which the metric stanza style pleases me entirely; yet I think a few passages written in too elevated a strain for the general spirit of the poem. This age leans too much to the Darwin style. Mr. Percy's Lenore owes its coldness to the adoption of this; and it seems peculiarly incongruous in the ballad — where habit has taught us to expect simplicity. Among the passages too stately and pompous, I should reckon —
>
> "The mountain echoes startling wake —
> And for devotion's choral swell
> Exchange the rude discordant noise —
> Fell Famine marks the maddening throng
> With cold Despair's averted eye," —
>
> and perhaps one or two more. In the twenty-first stanza, I

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[1] Some extracts from this venerable person's unpublished Memoirs of his own Life have been kindly sent to me by his son, the well-known physician of Chelsea College; from which it appears that the reverend doctor, and, more particularly still, his wife, a lady of remarkable talent and humor, had formed a high notion of Scott's future eminence at a very early period of his life. Dr. S. survived to a great old age, preserving his faculties quite entire, and I have spent many pleasant hours under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter Scott. We heard him preach an excellent circuit sermon when he was upwards of eighty-two, and at the Judges' dinner afterwards he was among the gayest of the company.

prefer Bürger's *trampling the corn into chaff and dust,* to your more metaphorical, and therefore less picturesque, "destructive sweep the field along." In the thirtieth, "On whirlwind's pinions swiftly borne," to me seems less striking than the still disapparition of the tumult and bustle — the earth has opened, and he is sinking with his evil genius to the nether world — as he approaches, *dumpf rauscht es wie ein fernes Meer* — it should be rendered, therefore, not by "Save what a distant torrent gave," but by some sounds which shall necessarily excite the idea of being *hell-sprung* — the sound of simmering seas of fire — pinings of goblins damned — or some analogous noise. The forty-seventh stanza is a very great improvement of the original. The profanest blasphemous speeches need not have been softened down, as, in proportion to the impiety of the provocation, increases the poetical probability of the final punishment. I should not have ventured upon these criticisms, if I did not think it required a microscopic eye to make any, and if I did not on the whole consider The Chase as a most spirited and beautiful translation. I remain (to borrow in another sense a concluding phrase from the Spectator), your constant admirer,

W. Taylor, Jun.

Norwich, 14th December, 1796.

The anticipations of these gentlemen, that Scott's versions would attract general attention in the south, were not fulfilled. He himself attributes this to the contemporaneous appearance of so many other translations from Lenore. "In a word," he says, "my adventure, where so many pushed off to sea, proved a dead loss, and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunkmaker. This failure did not operate in any unpleasant degree either on my feelings or spirits. I was coldly received by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends, and on the whole I was more bent to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice, than to be affronted by its indifference; or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labors in which I had almost by accident become engaged, and labored less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in a pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself."[1]

On the 12th of December Scott had the curiosity to witness the trial of one James Mackean, a shoemaker, for the murder of Buchanan, a carrier, employed to convey money weekly from the Glasgow bank to a manufacturing establishment at Lanark. Mackean invited the carrier to spend the evening in his house; conducted family worship in a style of much seeming fervor; and then, while his friend was occupied, came behind him, and almost severed his head from his body by one stroke of a razor. I have heard Scott describe the sanctimonious air which the murderer maintained during his trial — preserving throughout the aspect of a devout person, who believed himself to have been hurried into his accumulation of crime by an uncontrollable exertion of diabolical influence; and on his copy of the "Life of James Mackean, executed 25th January, 1797," I find the following marginal note: —

"I went to see this wretched man when under sentence of death, along with my friend, Mr. William Clerk, advocate. His great anxiety was to convince us that his diabolical murder was committed from a sudden impulse of revengeful and violent passion, not from deliberate design of plunder. But the contrary was manifest from the accurate preparation of the deadly instrument — a razor strongly lashed to an iron bolt — and also from the evidence on the trial, from which it seems he had invited his victim to drink tea with him on the day he perpetrated the murder, and that this was a reiterated invitation. Mackean was a good-looking elderly man, having a thin face and clear gray eye; such a man as may be ordinarily seen beside a collection-plate at a seceding meeting-house, a post which the said Mackean had occupied in his day. All Mackean's account of the murder is apocryphal. Buchanan was a powerful man, and Mackean slender. It appeared that the latter had engaged Buchanan in writing, then suddenly clapped one hand on his eyes, and struck the fatal blow with the other. The throat of the deceased was cut through his handkerchief to the back bone of the neck, against which the razor was hacked in several places."

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[1] *Remarks on Popular Poetry.* 1830.

In his pursuit of his German studies, Scott acquired, about this time, a very important assistant in Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, in Aberdeenshire — a gentleman considerably his junior,[1] who had just returned to Scotland from a residence of several years in Saxony, where he had obtained a thorough knowledge of the language, and accumulated a better collection of German books than any to which Scott had, as yet, found access. Shortly after Mr. Skene's arrival in Edinburgh, Scott requested to be introduced to him by a mutual friend, Mr. Edmonstone of Newton; and their fondness for the same literature, with Scott's eagerness to profit by his new acquaintance's superior attainment in it, thus opened an intercourse which general similarity of tastes, and I venture to add, in many of the most important features of character, soon ripened into the familiarity of a tender friendship — "An intimacy," Mr. Skene says, in a paper before me, "of which I shall ever think with so much pride — a friendship so pure and cordial as to have been able to withstand all the vicissitudes of nearly forty years, without ever having sustained even a casual chill from unkind thought or word." Mr. Skene adds, "During the whole progress of his varied life, to that eminent station which he could not but feel he at length held in the estimation, not of his countrymen alone, but of the whole world, I never could perceive the slightest shade of variance from that simplicity of character with which he impressed me on the first hour of our meeting."[2]

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[1] [James Skene, son of George Skene of Rubislaw, was born in 1775.]

[2] [Beside the memoranda placed by Mr. Skene in Lockhart's hands and

Among the common tastes which served to knit these friends together was their love of horsemanship, in which, as in all other manly exercises, Skene highly excelled; and the fears of a French invasion becoming every day more serious, their thoughts were turned with corresponding zeal to the project of organizing a force of mounted volunteers in Scotland. "The London Light Horse had set the example," says Mr. Skene; "but in truth it was to Scott's ardor that this force in the North owed its origin. Unable, by reason of his lameness, to serve amongst his friends on foot, he had nothing for it but to rouse the spirit of the moss-trooper, with which he readily inspired all who possessed the means of substituting the sabre for the musket."

On the 14th February, 1797, these friends and many more met and drew up an offer to serve as a body of volunteer cavalry in Scotland; which offer being transmitted through the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord-Lieutenant of Mid-Lothian, was accepted by Government. The organization of the corps proceeded rapidly; they extended their offer to serve in any part of the island in case of invasion; and this also being accepted, the whole arrangement was shortly completed; when Charles Maitland of Rankeillor was elected Major-Commandant; (Sir) William Rae of St. Catharine's, Captain; James Gordon of Craig, and George Robinson of Clermiston, Lieutenants; (Sir) William Forbes of Pitsligo, and James Skene of Rubislaw, Cornets; Walter Scott, Paymaster, Quartermaster, and Secretary; John Adams, Adjutant. But the treble duties thus devolved on Scott were found to interfere too severely with his other avocations, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore relieved him soon afterwards from those of paymaster.

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used by him in various portions of the *Life*, the friend's unpublished *Reminiscences*, from which Mr. Douglas has fortunately been enabled to draw largely in annotating the *Journal*, contain recollections of peculiar interest.]

"The part of quartermaster," says Mr. Skene, "was purposely selected for him, that he might be spared the rough usage of the ranks; but, notwithstanding his infirmity, he had a remarkably firm seat on horseback, and in all situations a fearless one: no fatigue ever seemed too much for him, and his zeal and animation served to sustain the enthusiasm of the whole corps, while his ready 'mot à rire' kept up, in all, a degree of good-humor and relish for the service, without which the toil and privations of long *daily* drills would not easily have been submitted to by such a body of gentlemen. At every interval of exercise, the order, *sit at ease*, was the signal for the quartermaster to lead the squadron to merriment; every eye was intuitively turned on 'Earl Walter,' as he was familiarly called by his associates of that date, and his ready joke seldom failed to raise the ready laugh. He took his full share in all the labors and duties of the corps, had the highest pride in its progress and proficiency, and was such a trooper himself as only a very powerful frame of body and the warmest zeal in the cause could have enabled any one to be. But his habitual good-humor was the great charm, and at the daily mess (for we all dined together when in quarters) that reigned supreme."

Earl Walter's first charger, by the way, was a tall and powerful animal, named Lenore. These daily drills appear to have been persisted in during the spring and summer of 1797; the corps spending moreover some weeks in quarters at Musselburgh. The majority of the troop having professional duties to attend to, the ordinary hour for drill was five in the morning; and when we reflect, that after some hours of hard work in this way, Scott had to produce himself regularly in the Parliament House with gown and wig, for the space of four or five hours at least, while his chamber practice, though still humble, was on the increase — and that he had found a plentiful source of new social engagements in his troop connections — it certainly could have excited no surprise had his literary studies been found suffering total intermission during this busy period. That such was not the case, however, his correspondence and note-books afford ample evidence.

He had no turn, at this time of his life, for early rising; so that the regular attendance at the morning drills was of itself a strong evidence of his military zeal; but he must have, in spite of them, and of all other circumstances, persisted in what was the usual custom of all his earlier life, namely, the devotion of the best hours of the night to solitary study. In general, both as a young man, and in more advanced age, his constitution required a good allowance of sleep, and he, on principle, indulged in it, saying, "He was but half a man if he had not full seven hours of utter unconsciousness;" but his whole mind and temperament were, at this period, in a state of most fervent exaltation, and spirit triumphed over matter. His translation of Steinberg's Otho of Wittelsbach is marked "1796–7;" from which, I conclude, it was finished in the latter year. The volume containing that of Meier's Wolfred of Dromberg, a drama of Chivalry, is dated 1797; and, I think, the reader will presently see cause to suspect, that though not alluded to in his imperfect note-book, these tasks must have been accomplished in the very season of the daily drills.

The letters addressed to him in March, April, and June, by Kerr of Abbotrule, George Chalmers, and his uncle at Rosebank, indicate his unabated interest in the collection of coins and ballads; and I shall now make a few extracts from his private note-book, some of which will at all events amuse the survivors of the Edinburgh Light Horse: —

"*March* 15, 1797. — Read Stanfield's trial, and the conviction appears very doubtful indeed. Surely no one could seriously believe, in 1688, that the body of the murdered bleeds at the touch of the murderer, and I see little else that directly touches Philip Stanfield. He was a very bad character, however; and tradition says, that having insulted Welsh, the wild preacher, one day in his early life, the saint called from the pulpit that God had revealed to him that this blasphemous youth would die in the sight of as many as were then assembled. It was believed at the time that Lady Stanfield had a hand in the assassination, or was at least privy to her son's plans; but I see nothing inconsistent with the old gentleman's having committed suicide.[1] The ordeal of touching the corpse was observed in Germany. They call it *barrecht*.

"*March* 27. —

'The friers of Fail
Gat never owre hard eggs, or owre thin kale;
For they made their eggs thin wi' butter,
And their kale thick wi' bread.
And the friers of Fail they made gude kale
On Fridays when they fasted;
They never wanted gear enough
As lang as their neighbours' lasted.'

"Fairy-rings. — *N. B.* Delrius says the same appearance occurs wherever the witches have held their Sabbath.

"For the ballad of 'Willie's lady,' compare Apuleius, lib. i. p. 33. . . .

"*April* 20. — The portmanteau to contain the following articles: 2 shirts; 1 black handkerchief; 1 nightcap, woollen; 1 pair pantaloons, blue; 1 flannel shirt with sleeves; 1 pair flannel drawers; 1 waistcoat; 1 pair worsted stockings or socks.

"In the slip, in cover of portmanteau, a case with shaving-things, combs, and a knife, fork, and spoon; a German pipe and tobacco-bag, flint, and steel; pipe-clay and oil, with brush for laying it on; a shoe-brush; a pair of shoes or hussar-boots; a horse-picker, and other loose articles.

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[1] See particulars of Stanfield's case in Lord Fountainhall's *Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs*, 1680–1701, edited by Sir Walter Scott. 4to, Edinburgh, 1822. Pp. 233–236.

"Belt with the flap and portmanteau, currycomb, brush, and mane-comb, with sponge.

"Over the portmanteau, the blue overalls, and a spare jacket for stable; a small horse-sheet, to cover the horse's back with, and a spare girth or two.

"In the cartouche-box, screw-driver and picker for pistol, with three or four spare flints.

"The horse-sheet may be conveniently folded below the saddle, and will save the back in a long march or bad weather. Beside the holster, two forefeet shoes.[1]

"*May* 22. — Apuleius, lib. ii. . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . Mr. Jenkinson's name (now Lord Liverpool) being proposed as a difficult one to rhyme to, a lady present hit off this verse extempore. — *N. B.* Both father and son (Lord Hawkesbury) have a peculiarity of vision: —

'Happy Mr. Jenkinson,
Happy Mr. Jenkinson,
I 'm sure to you
Your lady 's true,
For you have got a winking son.'

"23. — Delrius. . . .

"24. — 'I, John Bell of Brackenbrig, lies under this stane;

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[1] Some of Scott's most intimate friends at the Bar, partly, no doubt, from entertaining political opinions of another caste, were by no means disposed to sympathize with the demonstrations of his military enthusiasm at this period. For example, one of these gentlemen thus writes to another in April, 1797: " By the way, Scott is become the merest trooper that ever was begotten by a drunken dragoon on his trull in a hay-loft. Not an idea crosses his mind, or a word his lips, that has not an allusion to some d——d instrument or evolution of the Cavalry — 'Draw your swords — by single files to the right of front — to the left wheel — charge!' After all, he knows little more about wheels and charges than I do about the wheels of Ezekiel, or the King of Pelew about charges of horning on six days' date. I saw them charge on Leith Walk a few days ago, and I can assure you it was by no means orderly proceeded. Clerk and I are continually obliged to open a six-pounder upon him in self-defence, but in spite of a temporary confusion, he soon rallies and returns to the attack."

> Four of my sons laid it on my wame.
> I was man of my meat, and master of my wife,
> And lived in mine ain house without meikle strife.
> Gif thou be'st a better man in thy time than I was in mine,
> Tak this stane off my wame, and lay it upon thine.'

"25. — Meric Casaubon on Spirits. . . .

"26. — 'There saw we learned Maroe's golden tombe;
The way he cut an English mile in length
Thorow a rock of stone in one night's space.'

"Christopher Marlowe's Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus — a very remarkable thing. Grand subject — end grand. . . . Copied Prophecy of Merlin from Mr. Clerk's MS.

"27. — Read Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business, by Andrew Moreton. This was one of Defoe's many *aliases* — like his pen, in parts. . . .

> 'To Cuthbert, Car, and Collingwood, to Shafto and to Hall;
> To every gallant generous heart that for King James did fall.'

"28. — . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . Plain Proof of the True Father and Mother of the Pretended Prince of Wales, by W. Fuller. This fellow was pilloried for a forgery some years later. . . . Began *Nathan der Weise.*

"*June* 29. — Read Introduction to a Compendium on Brief Examination, by W. S. — viz., William Stafford — though it was for a time given to no less a W. S. than William Shakespeare. A curious treatise — the Political Economy of the Elizabethan Day — worth reprinting. . . .

"*July* 1. — Read Discourse of Military Discipline, by Captain Barry — a very curious account of the famous Low Countries armies — full of military hints worth note. . . . *Anthony Wood* again.

"3. — *Nathan der Weise.* . . . *Delrius.* . . .

"5. — Geutenberg's *Braut* begun.

"6. — The Bride again. *Delrius.*"

The note-book from which I have been copying is chiefly filled with extracts from Apuleius and Anthony-a-

Wood — most of them bearing, in some way, on the subject of popular superstitions. It is a pity that many leaves have been torn out; for if unmutilated, the record would probably have enabled one to guess whether he had already planned his Essay on Fairies.

I have mentioned his business at the Bar as increasing at the same time. His *fee-book* is now before me, and it shows that he made by his first year's practice £24 3*s.*; by the second, £57 15*s.*; by the third, £84 4*s.*; by the fourth, £90; and in his fifth year at the Bar — that is, from November, 1796 to July, 1797 — £144 10*s.*; of which £50 were fees from his father's chamber.

His friend, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, had been residing a good deal about this time in Cumberland: indeed, he was so enraptured with the scenery of the lakes, as to take a house in Keswick with the intention of spending half of all future years there. His letters to Scott (March, April, 1797) abound in expressions of wonder that he should continue to devote so much of his vacations to the Highlands of Scotland, "with every crag and precipice of which," says he, "I should imagine you would be familiar by this time; nay, that the goats themselves might almost claim you for an acquaintance;" while another district lay so near him, at least as well qualified "to give a swell to the fancy."

After the rising of the Court of Session in July, Scott accordingly set out on a tour to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Ferguson. Their first stage was Halyards in Tweeddale, then inhabited by his friend's father, the philosopher and historian; and they stayed there for a day or two, in the course of which Scott had his first and only interview with David Ritchie, the original of his Black Dwarf.[1] Proceeding southwards, the tourists visited Carlisle, Penrith, — the vale of the Eamont, including Mayburgh and Brougham Castle, — Ullswater and Windermere; and at length fixed their headquarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering-place of Gilsland, making excursions from thence to the various scenes of romantic interest which are commemorated in The Bridal of Triermain, and otherwise leading very much the sort of life depicted among the loungers of St. Ronan's Well. Scott was, on his first arrival in Gilsland, not a little engaged with the beauty of one of the young ladies lodged under the same roof with him; and it was on occasion of a visit in her company to some part of the Roman Wall that he indited his lines —

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[1] See the Introduction to this novel in the edition of 1830.

> "Take these flowers, which, purple waving,
> On the ruined rampart grew," etc.[1]

But this was only a passing glimpse of flirtation. A week or so afterwards commenced a more serious affair.

Riding one day with Ferguson, they met, some miles from Gilsland, a young lady taking the air on horseback, whom neither of them had previously remarked, and whose appearance instantly struck both so much that they kept her in view until they had satisfied themselves that she also was one of the party at Gilsland. The same evening there was a ball, at which Captain Scott produced himself in his regimentals, and Ferguson also thought proper to be equipped in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers. There was no little rivalry among the young travellers as to who should first get presented to the unknown beauty of the morning's ride; but though both the gentlemen in scarlet had the advantage of being dancing partners, their friend succeeded in handing the fair stranger to supper — and such was his first introduction to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.

Without the features of a regular beauty, she was rich in personal attractions; "a form that was fashioned as light as a fay's;" a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown; and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing; her address hovering between the reserve of a pretty young Englishwoman who has not mingled largely in general society, and a certain natural archness and gayety that suited well with the accompaniment of a French accent. A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed.[1]

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[1] I owe this circumstance to the recollection of Mr. Claud Russell, accountant in Edinburgh, who was one of the party. Previously I had always supposed these verses to have been inspired by Miss Carpenter.

She was the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted royalist, who held an office under Government,[2] and Charlotte Volere, his wife. She and her only brother, Charles Charpentier, had been educated in the Protestant religion of their mother; and when their father died, which occurred in the beginning of the Revolution, Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children, first to Paris, and then to England, where they found a warm friend and protector in the late Marquis of Downshire, who had, in the course of his travels in France, formed an intimate acquaintance with the family, and, indeed, spent some time under their roof. M. Charpentier had, in his first alarm as to the coming Revolution, invested £4000 in English securities — part in a mortgage upon Lord Downshire's estates. On the mother's death, which occurred soon after her arrival in London, this nobleman took on himself the character of sole guardian to her children; and Charles Charpentier received in due time, through his interest, an appointment in the service of the East India Company, in which he had by this time risen to the lucrative situation of Commercial Resident at Salem. His sister was now making a little excursion, under the care of the lady who had superintended her education, Miss Jane Nicolson, a daughter of Dr. Nicolson, Dean of Exeter, and granddaughter of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, well known as the editor of The English Historical Library. To some connections which the learned prelate's family had ever since his time kept up in the diocese of Carlisle, Miss Carpenter owed the direction of her summer tour.

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[1] ["You may perhaps have remarked Miss Carpenter at a Carlisle ball, but more likely not, as her figure is not very *frappant.* A smart-looking little girl with dark brown hair would probably be her portrait if drawn by an indifferent hand. But I, you may believe, should make a piece of work of my sketch, as little like the original as Hercules to me." — Scott to P. Murray, December, 1797. — *Familiar Letters*, vol. i. p. 10.]

[2] In several deeds which I have seen, M. Charpentier is designed "Ecuyer du Roi;" one of those purchasable ranks peculiar to the latter stages of the old French Monarchy. What the post he held was, I never heard.

Scott's father was now in a very feeble state of health, which accounts for his first announcement of this affair being made in a letter to his mother; it is undated; — but by this time the young lady had left Gilsland for Carlisle, where she remained until her destiny was settled.

TO MRS. SCOTT, GEORGE'S SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

My dear Mother, — I should very ill deserve the care and affection with which you have ever regarded me, were I to neglect my duty so far as to omit consulting my father and you in the most important step which I can possibly take in life, and upon the success of which my future happiness must depend. It is with pleasure I think that I can avail myself of your advice and instructions in an affair of so great importance as that which I have at present on my hands. You will probably guess from this preamble that I am engaged in a matrimonial plan, which is really the case. Though my acquaintance with the young lady has not been of long standing, this circumstance is in some degree counterbalanced by the intimacy in which we have lived, and by the opportunities which that intimacy has afforded me of remarking her conduct and sentiments on many different occasions, some of which were rather of a delicate nature, so that in fact I have seen more of her during the few weeks we have been together than I could have done after a much longer acquaintance, shackled by the common forms of ordinary life. You will not expect from me a description of her person — for which I refer you to my brother, as also for a fuller account of all the circumstances attending the business than can be comprised in the compass of a letter. Without flying into raptures, for I must assure you that my judgment as well as my affections are consulted upon this occasion — without flying into raptures, then, I may safely assure you that her temper is sweet and cheerful, her understanding good, and, what I know will give you pleasure, her principles of religion very serious. I have been very explicit with her upon the nature of my expectations, and she thinks she can accommodate herself to the situation which I should wish her to hold in society as my wife, which, you will easily comprehend, I mean should neither be extravagant nor degrading. Her fortune, though partly dependent upon her brother, who is high in office at Madras, is very considerable — at present £500 a year. This, however, we must, in some degree, regard as precarious — I mean to the full extent; and indeed, when you know her, you will not be surprised that I regard this circumstance chiefly because it removes those prudential considerations which would otherwise render our union impossible for the present. Betwixt her income and my own professional exertions, I have little doubt we will be enabled to hold the rank in society which my family and situation entitle me to fill.

My dear mother, I cannot express to you the anxiety I have that you will not think me flighty nor inconsiderate in this business. Believe me, that experience, in one instance — you cannot fail to know to what I allude — is too recent to permit my being so hasty in my conclusions as the warmth of my temper might have otherwise prompted. I am also most anxious that you should be prepared to show her kindness, which I know the goodness of your own heart will prompt, more especially when I tell you that she is an orphan, without relations, and almost without friends. Her guardian is — I should say *was*, for she is of age — Lord Downshire, to whom I must write for his consent, — a piece of respect to which he is entitled for his care of her, — and there the matter rests at present. I think I need not tell you that if I assume the new character which I threaten, I shall be happy to find that in that capacity I may make myself more useful to my brothers, and especially to Anne, than I could in any other. On the other hand, I shall certainly expect that my friends will endeavor to show every attention in their power to a woman who forsakes for me prospects much more splendid than what I can offer, and who comes into Scotland without a single friend but myself. I find I could write a great deal more upon this subject, but as it is late, and as I must write to my father, I shall restrain myself. I think (but you are best judge) that in the circumstances in which I stand, you should write to her, Miss Carpenter, under cover to me at Carlisle.

Write to me very fully upon this important subject — send me your opinion, your advice, and, above all, your blessing; you will see the necessity of not delaying a minute in doing so, and in keeping this business *strictly private*, till you hear farther from me, since you are not ignorant that even at this advanced period an objection on the part of Lord Downshire, or many other accidents, may intervene; in which case, I should little wish my disappointment to be public.

Believe me, my dear Mother,
Ever your dutiful and affectionate son,
WALTER SCOTT.

Scott remained in Cumberland until the Jedburgh assizes recalled him to his legal duties. On arriving in that town, he immediately sent for his friend Shortreed, whose *memorandum* records that the evening of the 30th September, 1797 was one of the most joyous he ever spent. "Scott," he says, "was *sair* beside himself about Miss Carpenter; — we toasted her twenty times over — and sat together, he raving about her, until it was one in the morning." He soon returned to Cumberland; and the following letters will throw light on the character and conduct of the parties, and on the nature of the difficulties which were presented by the prudence and prejudices of the young advocate's family connections. It appears, that at one stage of the business, Scott had seriously contemplated leaving the Bar at Edinburgh, and establishing himself with his bride (I know not in what capacity) in one of the colonies.

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., ADVOCATE, EDINBURGH.

CARLISLE, October 4, 1797.

It is only an hour since I received Lord Downshire's letter. You will say, I hope, that I am indeed very good to write so soon, but I almost fear that all my goodness can never carry me through all this plaguy writing. Lord Downshire will be happy to hear from you. He is the very best man on earth — his letter is kind and affectionate, and full of advice, much in the style of *your last.* I am to consult *most carefully my heart.* Do you believe I did not do it when I gave you my consent? It is true, I don't like to reflect on that subject. I am afraid. It is very awful to think it is for life. How can I ever laugh after such tremendous thoughts? I believe never more. I am hurt to find that your friends don't think the match a prudent one. If it is not agreeable to them all, you must then forget me, for I have too much pride to think of connecting myself in a family were I not equal to them. Pray, my dear sir, write to Lord D. immediately — explain yourself to him as you would to me, and he will, I am sure, do all he can to serve us. If you really love me, you must love him, and write to him as you would to a friend.

Adieu, — au plaisir de vous revoir bientôt.

C. C.

TO ROBERT SHORTREED, ESQ., SHERIFF-SUBSTITUTE, JEDBURGH.

SELKIRK, 8th October, 1797.

DEAR BOB, — This day a long train of anxieties was put an end to by a letter from Lord Downshire, couched in the most flattering terms, giving his consent to my marriage with his ward. I am thus far on my way to Carlisle — only for a visit — because, betwixt her reluctance to an immediate marriage and the imminent approach of the session, I am afraid I shall be thrown back to the Christmas holidays. I shall be home in about eight days.

Ever yours sincerely,

W. SCOTT.

TO MISS CHRISTIAN RUTHERFORD, ASHESTIEL, BY SELKIRK.

Has it never happened to you, my dear Miss Christy, in the course of your domestic economy, to meet with a drawer stuffed so very, so *extremely* full, that it was very difficult to pull it open, however desirous you might be to exhibit its contents? In case this miraculous event has ever taken place, you may somewhat conceive from thence the cause of my silence, which has really proceeded from my having a very great deal to communicate; so much so, that I really hardly know how to begin. As for my affection and friendship for you, believe me sincerely, they neither slumber nor sleep, and it is only your suspicions of their drowsiness which incline me to write at this period of a business highly interesting to me, rather than when I could have done so with something like certainty — Hem! Hem! It must come out at once — I am in a very fair way of being married to a very amiable young woman, with whom I formed an attachment in the course of my tour. She was born in France — her parents were of English extraction — the name Carpenter. She was left an orphan early in life, and educated in England, and is at present under the care of a Miss Nicolson, a daughter of the late Dean of Exeter, who was on a visit to her relations in Cumberland. Miss Carpenter is of age, but as she lies under great obligations to the Marquis of Downshire, who was her guardian, she cannot take a step of such importance without his consent — and I daily expect his final answer upon the subject. Her fortune is dependent, in a great measure, upon an only and very affectionate brother. He is Commercial Resident at Salem in India, and has settled upon her an annuity of £500. Of her personal accomplishments I shall only say that she possesses very good sense, with uncommon good temper, which I have seen put to most severe trials. I must bespeak your kindness and friendship for her. You may easily believe I shall rest very much both upon Miss R. and you for giving her the *carte de pays*, when she comes to Edinburgh. I may give you a hint that there is no *romance* in her composition — and that, though born in France, she has the sentiments and manners of an Englishwoman, and does not like to be thought otherwise. A very slight tinge in her pronunciation is all which marks the foreigner. She is at present at Carlisle, where I shall join her as soon as our arrangements are finally made. Some difficulties have occurred in settling matters with my father, owing to certain prepossessions which you can easily conceive his adopting. One main article was the uncertainty of her provision, which has been in part removed by the safe arrival of her remittances for this year, with assurances of their being regular and even larger in future, her brother's situation being extremely lucrative. Another objection was her birth: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" but as it was *birth merely and* *solely*, this has been abandoned. *You* will be more interested about other points regarding her, and I can only say that — though our acquaintance was shorter than ever I could have thought of forming such a connection upon — it was exceedingly close, and gave me full opportunities for observation — and if I had parted with her, it must have been forever, which both parties began to think would be a disagreeable thing. She has conducted herself through the whole business with so much propriety as to make a strong impression in her favor upon the minds of my father and mother, prejudiced as they were against her, from the circumstances I have mentioned. We shall be your neighbors in the New Town, and intend to live very quietly; Charlotte will need many lessons from Miss R. in housewifery. Pray show this letter to Miss R. with my very best compliments. Nothing can now stand in the way except Lord Downshire, who may not think the match a prudent one for Miss C.; but he will surely think her entitled to judge for herself at her age, in what she would wish to place her happiness. She is not a beauty, by any means, but her person and face are very engaging. She is a brunette; her manners are lively, but when necessary she can be very serious. She was baptized and educated a Protestant of the Church of England. I think I have now said enough upon this subject. Do not write till you hear from me again, which will be when all is settled. I wish this important event may hasten your return to town. I send a goblin story, with best compliments to the misses, and ever am, yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.

THE ERL-KING.[1]

(*The Erl-King is a goblin that haunts the Black Forest in Thuringia. — To be read by a candle particularly long in the snuff.*)

O, who rides by night thro' the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;

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[1] From the German of Goethe.

And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

"O father, see yonder! see yonder!" he says.
"My boy, upon what doest thou fearfully gaze?" —
"O, 't is the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud." —
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

(*The Erl-King speaks.*)
"O, come and go with me, thou loveliest child;
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"O father, my father, and did you not hear
The Erl-King whisper so low in my ear?"
"Be still, my heart's darling — my child, be at ease;
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro' the trees."

Erl-King.
"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"O father, my father, and saw you not plain
The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?" —
"O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the gray willow that danced to the moon."

Erl-King.
"O, come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away." —
"O father! O father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me — his grasp is so cold!"

Sore trembled the father; he spurr'd thro' the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasp'd to his bosom, the infant was *dead!*

You see I have not altogether lost the faculty of rhyming. I assure you, there is no small impudence in attempting a version of that ballad, as it has been translated by *Lewis.* — All good things be with you. W. S.

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., ADVOCATE, EDINBURGH.

LONDON, October 15, 1797.

SIR, — I received your letter with pleasure, instead of considering it as an intrusion. One thing more being fully stated would have made it perfectly satisfactory, — namely, the sort of income you immediately possess, and the sort of maintenance Miss Carpenter, in case of your demise, might reasonably expect. Though she is of an age to judge for herself in the choice of an object that she would like to run the race of life with, she has referred the subject to me. As her friend and guardian, I in duty must try to secure her happiness, by endeavoring to keep her comfortable immediately, and to prevent her being left destitute, in case of any unhappy contingency. Her good sense and good education are her chief fortune; therefore, in the worldly way of talking, she is not entitled to much. Her brother, who was also left under my care at an early period, is excessively fond of her; he has no person to think of but her as yet; and will certainly be enabled to make her very handsome presents, as he is doing very well in India, where I sent him some years ago, and where he bears a very high character, I am happy to say. I do not throw out this to induce you to make any proposal beyond what prudence and discretion recommend; but I hope I shall hear from you by return of post, as I may be shortly called out of town to some distance. As children are in general the consequence of an happy union, I should wish to know what may be your thoughts or wishes upon that subject. I trust you will not think me too particular; indeed I am sure you will not, when you consider that I am endeavoring to secure the happiness and welfare of an estimable young woman whom you admire and profess to be partial and attached to, and for whom I have the highest regard, esteem, and respect.

I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

DOWNSHIRE.

TO THE SAME.

CARLISLE, October 22.

Your last letter, my dear sir, contains a very fine train of *perhaps*, and of so many pretty conjectures, that it is not flattering you to say you excel in the art of tormenting yourself. As it happens, you are quite wrong in all your suppositions. I have been waiting for Lord D.'s answer to your letter, to give a full answer to your very proper inquiries about my family. Miss Nicolson says, that when she did offer to give you some information, you refused it — and advises me *now* to wait for Lord D.'s letter. Don't believe I have been idle; I have been writing very long letters to him, and all about you. How can you think that I will give an answer about the house until I hear from London? — that is quite impossible; and I believe you are a little out of your senses to imagine I can be in Edinburgh before the twelfth of next month. O, my dear sir, no — you must not think of it this *great while*. I am much flattered by your mother's remembrance; present my respectful compliments to her. You don't mention your father in your last *anxious* letter — I hope he is better. I am expecting every day to hear from my brother. You may tell your uncle he is Commercial Resident at Salem. He will find the name of Charles C. in his India list. My compliments to Captain Scott. *Sans adieu*, C. C.

TO THE SAME.

CARLISLE, October 25.

Indeed, Mr. Scott, I am by no means pleased with all this writing. I have told you how much I dislike it, and yet you still persist in asking me to write, and that by return of post. O, you really are quite out of your senses. I should not have indulged you in that whim of yours, had you not given me that hint that my silence gives an air of mystery. I have no reason that can detain me in acquainting you that my father and mother were French, of the name of Charpentier; he had a place under government; their residence was at Lyons, where you would find on inquiries that they lived in good repute and in *very good style.* I had the misfortune of losing my father before I could know the value of such a parent. At his death we were left to the care of Lord D., who was his very great friend; and very soon after I had the affliction of losing my mother. Our taking the name of Carpenter was on my brother's going to India, to prevent any little difficulties that might have occurred. I hope now you are pleased. Lord D. could have given you every information, as he has been acquainted with all my family. You say you almost love *him;* but until your *almost* comes to a *quite*, I cannot love *you.* Before I conclude this famous epistle, I will give you a little hint — that is, not to put so many *musts* in your letters — it is beginning *rather too soon;* and another thing is, that I take the liberty not to mind them much, but I expect you mind me. You *must* take care of yourself; you *must* think of me, and believe me yours sincerely,

C. C.

TO THE SAME.

CARLISLE, October 26.

I have only a minute before the post goes, to assure you, my dear sir, of the welcome reception of the stranger.[1] The very great likeness to a friend of mine will endear him to me; he shall be my constant companion, but I wish he could give me an answer to a thousand questions I have to make — one in particular, what reason have you for so many fears you express? Have your friends changed? Pray let me know the truth — they perhaps don't like me *being French.* Do write immediately — let it be in better spirits. Et croyez-moi toujours votre sincere C. C.

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[1] A miniature of Scott.

TO THE SAME.

October 31.

. . . All your apprehensions about your friends make me very uneasy. At your father's age, prejudices are not easily overcome — old people have, you know, so much more wisdom and experience, that we must be guided by them. If he has an objection on my being *French*, I excuse him with all my heart, as I don't love them myself. O how all these things plague me! — when will it end? And to complete the matter, you talk of going to the West Indies. I am certain your father and uncle say you are a hot *heady* young man, quite mad, and I assure you I join with them; and I must believe, that when you have such an idea, you have then determined to think no more of me. I begin to repent of having accepted your picture. I will send it *back again*, if you ever think again about the West Indies. Your family then would *love me* very much — to forsake them for a *stranger*, a person who does not possess half the charms and good qualities that you *imagine.* I think I hear your uncle calling you a hot heady young man. I am certain of it, and I am *generally right* in my conjectures. What does your sister say about it? I suspect that she thinks on the matter as I should do, with fears and anxieties for the happiness of her brother. If it be proper, and you think it would be *acceptable*, present my best compliments to your mother; and to my old acquaintance Captain Scott I beg to be remembered. This evening is the first ball — don't you wish to be of our party? I guess your answer — it would give me infinite pleasure. En attendant le plaisir de vous revoir, je suis toujours votre constante CHARLOTTE.

TO THE SAME.

THE CASTLE, HARTFORD, October 29, 1797.

SIR, — I received the favor of your letter. It was so manly, honorable, candid, and so full of good sense, that

I think Miss Carpenter's friends cannot in any way object to the union you propose. Its taking place, when or where, will depend upon herself, as I shall write to her by this night's post. Any provision that may be given to her by her brother, you will have settled upon her and her children; and I hope, with all my heart, that every earthly happiness may attend you both. I shall be always happy to hear it, and to subscribe myself your faithful friend and obedient humble servant,

DOWNSHIRE.

(ON THE SAME SHEET.)

CARLISLE, November 4.

Last night I received the enclosed for you from Lord Downshire. If it has your approbation, I shall be very glad to see you as soon as will be convenient. I have a thousand things to tell you; but let me beg of you not to think for some time of a house. I am sure I can convince you of the propriety and prudence of waiting until your father will settle things more to your satisfaction, and until I have heard from my brother. You *must* be of my way of thinking. — Adieu. C. C.

Scott obeyed this summons, and I suppose remained in Carlisle until the Court of Session met, which is always on the 12th of November.

TO W. SCOTT, ESQ., ADVOCATE, EDINBURGH.

CARLISLE, November 14.

Your letter never could have come in a more favorable moment. Anything you could have said would have been well received. You surprise me much at the regret you express you had of leaving Carlisle. Indeed, I can't believe it was on my account, I was so uncommonly stupid. I don't know what could be the matter with me, I was so very low, and felt really ill: it was even a trouble to speak. The settling of our little plans — all looked so much in earnest — that I began reflecting more seriously than I generally do, or *approve of.* I don't think that very thoughtful people ever can be happy. As this is my maxim, adieu to all thoughts. I have made a determination of being pleased with everything, and with everybody in Edinburgh; a wise system for happiness, is it not? I enclose the lock. I have had almost all my hair cut off. Miss Nicolson has taken some, which she sends to London to be made to something, but this you are not to know of, as she intends to present it to you. . . . I am happy to hear of your father's being better pleased as to money matters; it will come at last; don't let that trifle disturb you. Adieu, Monsieur. J'ai l'honneur d'être votre très humble et très Obéissante C. C.

CARLISLE, November 27.

You have made me very *triste* all day. Pray never more complain of being poor. Are you not ten times richer than I am? Depend on yourself and your profession. I have no doubt you will rise very high, and be a *great rich man*, but we should look down to be contented with our lot, and banish all disagreeable thoughts. We shall do very well. I am very sorry to hear you have such a *bad head.* I hope I shall nurse away all your aches. I think you write too much. When I am *mistress* I shall not allow it. How very angry I should be with you if you were to part with Lenore. Do you really believe I should think it an *unnecessary expense* where your health and pleasure can be concerned? I have a better opinion of you, and I am very glad you don't give up the cavalry, as I love anything that is *stylish.* Don't forget to find a stand for the old carriage, as I shall like to keep it, in case we should have to go any journey; it is so much more convenient than the post-chaises, and will do very well till we can keep *our carriage.* What an idea of yours was that to mention where you wish to have your *bones laid!*[1] If you were married, I should think you were tired of me. A very pretty compliment *before marriage.* I hope sincerely that I shall not live to see that day. If you always have those cheerful thoughts, how very pleasant and gay you must be.

Adieu, my dearest friend. Take care of yourself if you love me, as I have *no wish* that you should *visit* that *beautiful* and *romantic* scene, the burying-place. Adieu, once more, and believe that you are loved very sincerely by C. C.

December 10.

If I could but really believe that my letter gave you only half the pleasure you express, I should almost think, my dearest Scott, that I should get very fond of writing merely for the pleasure to *indulge* you — that is saying a great deal. I hope you are sensible of the compliment I pay you, and don't expect I shall *always* be so pretty behaved. You may depend on me, my dearest friend, for fixing as *early* a day as I possibly can; and if it happens to be not quite so soon as you wish, you must not be angry with me. It is very unlucky you are such a bad housekeeper — as I am no better. I shall try. I hope to have very soon the pleasure of seeing you, and to tell you how much I love you; but I wish the first fortnight was over. With all my love, and those sort of pretty things — adieu. CHARLOTTE.

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[1] ["I had a visit from Mr. Haliburton to-day, and asked him all about your brother, who was two years in his house. My father is Mr. Haliburton's relation and chief, as he represents a very old family of that name. When you go to the south of Scotland with me, you will see their burying-place, now all that remains with my father of a very handsome property. It is one of the most beautiful and romantic scenes you ever saw, among the ruins of an old abbey. When I die, Charlotte, you must cause my bones to be laid there; but we shall have many happy days before that, I hope." — Scott to Miss Carpenter, November 22, 1797. — *Familiar Letters*, vol. i. p. 8.]

P. S. — *Etudiez votre Français.* Remember you are to teach me Italian in return, but I shall be but a stupid scholar. *Aimez Charlotte.*

CARLISLE, December 14.

. . . I heard last night from my friends in London, and I shall certainly have the deed this week. I will send it to you directly; but not to lose so much time, as you have been reckoning, I will prevent any little delay that might happen by the post, by fixing already next Wednesday for your coming here, and on Thursday the 21st — Oh, my dear Scott, on that day I shall be yours forever. C. C.

P. S. — Arrange it so that we shall see none of your family the night of our arrival. I shall be so tired, and such a fright, I should not be seen to advantage.

To these extracts I may add the following from the first leaf of an old black-letter Bible at Abbotsford: —

"*Secundum morem majorum hæc de familiâ Gualteri Scott, Jurisconsulti Edinensis, in librum hunc sacrum manu suâ conscripta sunt.*

"*Gualterus Scott, filius Gualteri Scott et Annæ Rutherford, natus erat apud Edinam* 15*mo die Augusti*, A. D. 1771.

"*Socius Facultatis Juridicæ Edinensis receptus erat* 11*mo die Julii*, A. D. 1792.

"*In ecclesiam Sanctæ Mariæ apud Carlisle, uxorem duxit Margaretam Charlottam Carpenter, filiam quondam Joannis Charpentier et Charlottæ Volere, Lugdunensem*, 24*to die Decembris*, 1797."[1]

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[1] The account in the text of Miss Carpenter's origin has been, I am aware, both spoken and written of as an uncandid one: it had been expected that even in 1837 I would not pass in silence a rumor of early prevalence, which represented her and her brother as children of Lord Downshire by Madame Charpentier. I did not think it necessary to allude to this story while any of Sir Walter's own children were living;

and I presume it will be sufficient for me to say now, that neither I, nor, I firmly believe, any one of them, ever heard either from Sir Walter, or from his wife, or from Miss Nicolson (who survived them both) the slightest hint as to the rumor in question. There is not an expression in the preserved correspondence between Scott, the young lady, and the Marquis, that gives it a shadow of countenance. Lastly, Lady Scott always kept hanging by her bedside, and repeatedly kissed in her dying moments, a miniature of her father which is now in my hands; and it is the well-painted likeness of a handsome gentleman — but I am assured the features have no resemblance to Lord Downshire or any of the Hill family. — (1848.)

END OF VOLUME ONE